

THE
WORKS
OF
ALEXANDER POPE, ESQ.
VOLUME VIII.
BEING THE
SECOND OF HIS LETTERS.



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VOLUME VIII.
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SECOND OF HIS LETTERS.



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L E T T E R S

TO AND FROM

EDWARD BLOUNT, ESQ.

THE

HON. ROBERT DIGBY,

DR. ATTERBURY,

Bishop of ROCHESTER

MR. GAY, AND OTHERS.

LETTERS

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Vol. VII.



LETTERS

TO AND FROM

EDWARD BLOUNT, Esq.

From 1714 to 1725.

LETTER I.

MR. POPE to EDWARD BLOUNT, Esq.

Aug. 27, 1714.

Whatever studies on the one hand, or amusements on the other, it shall be my fortune to fall into, I shall be equally incapable of forgetting you in any of them. The task I undertook, ¹ though of weight enough in itself, has had a voluntary increase by the enlarging my design of the *Notes*; ² and the necessity of consulting a number of Books has carried me to Oxford: but, I fear, thro' my Lord Harcourt's and Dr. Clarke's means, I shall be more conversant with the pleasures and company of the place, than with the books and manuscripts of it.

¹ The Translation of Homer's *Iliad*.

P.

² The notes on the *Iliad* were his own: Those on the *Odyssey* were Dr. Broome's. - - - But they speak their respective Authors.

I find still more reason to complain of the negligence of the Geographers in their Maps of old Greece, since I looked upon two or three more noted names in the public libraries here. But with all the care I am capable of, I have some cause to fear the engraver will prejudice me in a few situations. I have been forced to write to him in so high a style, that were my epistle intercepted, it would raise no small admiration in an ordinary man. There is scarce an order in it of less importance, than to remove such and such mountains, alter the course of such and such rivers, place a large city on such a coast, and raze another country. I have set bounds to the sea, and said to the land, Thus far shalt thou advance, and no further. ³ In the mean time, I, who talk and command at this rate, am in danger of losing my horse, and stand in some fear of a country justice. ⁴ To disarm me indeed may be but prudential, considering what Armies I have at present on foot, and in my service; a hundred thousand Grecians are no contemptible body; for all that I can tell, they may be as formidable as four thousand Priests; and they seem proper forces to send against those in Barcelona. That siege deserves as fine a poem as the Iliad, and the machining part of poetry would be the juster in it, as, they say, the inhabitants expect Angels from heaven to their assistance. May I venture to say who am a Papist, and say to you who are a Papist, that

³ This relates to the Map of ancient Greece, laid down by our Author in his observations on the second Iliad. P.

⁴ Some of the Laws were, at this time, put in force against the Papists.

nothing is more astonishing to me, than that people so greatly warm'd with a sense of Liberty, should be capable of harbouring such weak superstition, and that so much bravery and so much folly can inhabit the same breasts?

I could not but take a trip to London on the death of the Queen, mov'd, by the common curiosity of mankind, who leave their own business to be looking upon other mens. I thank God, that, as for myself, I am below all the accidents of state-changes by my circumstances, and above them by my philosophy. Common charity of man to man, and universal goodwill to all, are the points I have most at heart; and I am sure, those are not to be broken for the sake of any governors, or government. I am willing to hope the best, and what I more wish than my own or any particular man's advancement, is, that this turn may put an end entirely to the divisions of Whig and Tory; that the parties may love each other as well as I love them both, or at least hurt each other as little as I would either: and that our own people may live as quietly as we shall certainly let theirs; that is to say, that want of power itself in us may not be a surer prevention of harm, than want of will in them. I am sure, if all Whigs and all Tories had the spirit of one Roman Catholic that I know, it would be well for all Roman Catholics; and if all Roman Catholics had always had that spirit, it had been well for all others; and we had never been charged with so wicked a spirit as that of Persecution.

I agree with you in my sentiments of the state of our nation since this change: I find myself just in the

same situation of mind you describe as your own, heartily wishing the good, that is, the quiet of my Country, and hoping a total end of all the unhappy divisions of mankind by party-spirit, which at best is but the madness of many for the gain of a few.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R II.

From M R. B L O U N T.

IT is with a great deal of pleasure I see your letter, dear Sir, written in a style that shews you full of health, and in the midst of diversions: I think those two things necessary to a man who has such undertakings in hand as Yours. All lovers of Homer are indebted to you for taking so much pains about the situation of his Hero's kingdoms; it will not only be of great use with regard to his works, but to all that read any of the Greek historians; who generally are ill understood thro' the difference of the maps as to the places they treat of, which makes one think one author contradicts another. You are going to set us right; and 'tis an advantage every body will gladly see you engross the glory of.

You can draw rules to be free and easy, from formal pedants; and teach men to be short and pertinent, from tedious commentators. However, I congratulate your happy deliverance from such authors, as you (with all your humanity) cannot wish alive again to converse with. Critics will quarrel with you, if you

dare to please without their leave; and Zealots will shrug up their shoulders at a man, that pretends to get to Heaven out of their form, dress, and diet. I would no more make a judgment of an author's genius from a damning critic, than I would of a man's religion from an unsaving zealot.

I could take great delight in affording you the new glory of making a *Barceloniad* (if I may venture to coin such a word:) I fancy you would find a juster parallel than it seems at first sight; for the Trojans too had a great mixture of folly with their bravery; and I am out of countenance for them when I read the wise result of their council, where, after a warm debate between Antenor and Paris about restoring Helen, Priam sagely determines that they shall go to supper. And as for the Greeks, what can equal their superstition in sacrificing an innocent lady?

Tantum Religio potuit, &c.

I have a good opinion of my politics, since they agree with a man who always thinks so justly as you. I wish it were in our power to persuade all the nation into as calm and steady a disposition of mind.

We have receiv'd the late melancholy news, with the usual ceremony, of condoling in one breath for the loss of a gracious Queen, and in another rejoicing for an illustrious King. My views carry me no farther, than to wish the peace and welfare of my Country; and my morals and politics teach me to leave all that to be adjusted by our representatives above, and to divine providence. It is much at one to you and me, who sit at the helm, provided they will permit us to sail quietly in the great ship. Ambition is a vice

that is timely mortify'd in us poor papists: we ought in recompence to cultivate as many virtues in ourselves as we can, that we may be truly great. Among my Ambitions, that of being a sincere friend is one of the chief: yet I will confess that I have a secret pleasure to have some of my descendants know, that their Ancestor was great with Mr. Pope.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R III.

From MR. BLOUNT.

Nov. 11, 1715.

IT is an agreement of long date between you and me, that you should do with my letters just as you pleased, and answer them at your leisure; and that is as soon as I shall think you ought. I have so true a taste of the substantial part of your friendship, that I wave all ceremonials; and am sure to make you as many visits as I can, and leave you to return them whenever you please, assuring you they shall at all times be heartily welcome to me.

The many alarms we have from your parts, have no effect upon the genius that reigns in our country, which is happily turn'd to preserve peace and quiet, among us. What a dismal scene has there been opened in the North? what ruin have those unfortunate rash gentlemen drawn upon themselves and their miserable followers, and perchance upon many others too, who upon no account would be their followers? How-

ever, it may look ungenerous to reproach people in distress. I don't remember you and I ever used to trouble ourselves about politics, but when any matter happened to fall into our discourse, we us'd to condemn all undertakings that tended towards the disturbing the peace and quiet of our Country, as contrary to the notions we had of morality and religion, which oblige us on no pretence whatsoever to violate the laws of charity. How many lives have there been lost in hot blood, and how many more are there like to be taken of in cold? If the broils of the nation affect you, come down to me, and though we are farmers, you know Eumeus made his friends welcome. You shall here worship the Echo at your ease; indeed we are forced to do so, because we can't hear the first report, and therefore are obliged to listen to the second; which, for security sake, I do not always believe neither.

'Tis a great many years since I fell in love with the character of Pomponius Atticus: I long'd to imitate him a little, and have contriv'd hitherto, to be, like him, engag'd in no party, but to be a faithful friend to some in both: I find myself very well in this way hitherto, and live in a certain peace of mind by it, which, I am persuaded, brings a man more content than all the perquisites of wild ambition. I with pleasure join with you in wishing, nay I am not ashamed to say, in praying for the welfare temporal and eternal of all mankind. How much more affectionately then shall I do so for you, since I am in a most particular manner, and with all sincerity, Your, &c.

LETTER IV.

Jan. 21, 1715-16.

I Know of nothing that will be so interesting to you at present, as some circumstances of the last act of that eminent comic poet, and our friend, Wycherly. He had often told me, as I doubt not he did all his acquaintance, that he would marry as soon as his life was despair'd of: Accordingly a few days before his death he underwent the ceremony; and join'd together those two sacraments which, wise men say, should be the last we receive; for, if you observe, Matrimony is placed after Extreme unction in our Catechism, as a kind of hint of the order of time in which they are to be taken. The old man then lay down, satisfy'd in the conscience of having by this one act paid his just debts, obliged a woman, who (he was told) had merit, and shewn an heroic resentment of the ill usage of his next heir. Some hundred pounds which he had with the Lady, discharged those debts; a jointure of four hundred a year made her a recompence; and the nephew he left to comfort himself as well as he could, with the miserable remains of a mortgaged estate. I saw our friend twice after this was done, less peevish in his sickness than he used to be in his health; neither much afraid of dying, nor (which in him had been more likely) much ashamed of marrying. The evening before he expired, he called his young wife to the bedside, and earnestly entreated her not to deny him one request, the last he should make.

Upon her assurances of consenting to it, he told her. „ My dear, it is only this, that you will never marry „ an old man again. „ I cannot help remarking, that sickness, which often destroys both wit and wisdom, yet seldom has power to remove that talent which we call humour: Mr. Wycherly shew'd his, even in this last compliment; tho' I think his request a little hard, for why should he bar her from doubling her Jointure on the same easy terms?

So trivial as these circumstances are, I should not be displeas'd myself to know such trifles, when they concern or characterise any eminent person. The wisest and wittiest of men are seldom wiser or wittier than others in these sober moments: At least, our friend ended much in the character he had lived in: and Horace's rule for a play, may as well be apply'd to him as a play-wright,

Servetur ad imum

Qualis ab inceptu processerit, et sibi constet.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

Feb. 10, 1715-16.

I Am just return'd from the country, whither Mr. Rowe accompanied me, and pass'd a week in the forest. I need not tell you how much a man of his turn entertain'd me; but I must acquaint you there is a vivacity and gaiety of disposition almost peculiar to him, which make it impossible to part from him without that uneasiness which generally succeeds all our

pleasures. I have been just taking a solitary walk by moon-shine, full of reflections on the transitory nature of all human delights; and giving my thoughts a loose in the contemplation of those satisfactions which probably we may hereafter taste in the company of separate spirits, when we shall range the walks above, and perhaps gaze on this world at as vast a distance as we now do on those worlds. The pleasures we are to enjoy in that conversation must undoubtedly be of a nobler kind, and (not unlikely) may proceed from the discoveries each shall communicate to another, of God and of Nature: for the happiness of minds can surely be nothing but knowledge.

The highest gratification we receive here from company is Mirth, which at the best is but a fluttering unquiet motion, that beats about the breast for a few moments, and after leaves it void and empty. Keeping good company, even the best, is but a less shameful art of losing time. What we here call science and study, are little better: the greater number of arts to which we apply ourselves are mere groping in the dark, and even the search of our most important concerns in a future being, is but a needless, anxious, and uncertain haste to be knowing, sooner than we can, what without all this solicitude we shall know a little later. We are but curious impertinents in the case of futurity. 'Tis not our business to be guessing what the state of souls shall be, but to be doing what may make our own state happy; we cannot be knowing, but we can be virtuous.

If this be my notion of a great part of that high science, Divinity, you will be so civil as to imagine I lay no mighty stress upon the rest. Even of my darling

poetry I really make no other use, than horses of the bells that gingle about their ears (tho' now and then they toss their heads as if they were proud of them) only to jog on, a little more merrily.

Your observations on the narrow conceptions of mankind in the point of friendship, confirm me in what I was so fortunate as at my first knowledge of you to hope, and since so amply to experience. Let me take so much decent pride and dignity upon me, as to tell you, that but for opinions like these which I discover'd in your mind, I had never made the trial I have done; which has succeeded so much to mine, and, I believe, not less to your satisfaction: for, if I know you right, your pleasure is greater in obliging me, than I can feel on my part, till it falls in my power to oblige you.

Your remark, that the variety of opinions in politics or religion is often rather a gratification, than an objection, to people who have sense enough to consider the beautiful order of nature in her variations; makes me think you have not construed Joannes Secundus wrong, in the verse which precedes that which you quote: *Bene nota fides*, as I take it, does no way signify the Roman Catholic Religion, tho' Secundus was of it. I think it was a generous thought, and one that flow'd from an exalted mind, That it was not improbable but God might be delighted with the various methods of worshipping him, which divided the whole world. 5 I am pretty sure you and I should no more

5 This was an opinion taken up by the old Philosophers, as the last support of Paganism against Christianity: And the Missionaries, to both the Indies, tell us, it is the first answer modern barbarians

make good Inquisitors to the modern tyrants in faith, than we could have been qualified for Lictors to Procrustes, when he converted refractory members with the rack. In a word, I can only repeat to you what, I think, I have formerly said; that I as little fear God will damn a man who has Charity, as I hope that any Priest can save him without it.

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

March 20, 1715-16.

I Find that a real concern is not only a hindrance to speaking, but to writing too: the more time we give ourselves to think over one's own or a friend's unhappiness, the more unable we grow to express the grief that proceeds from it. It is as natural to delay a letter, at such a season as this, as to retard a melancholy visit to a person one cannot relieve. One is ashamed in that circumstance, to pretend to entertain people with trifling, insignificant affectations of sorrow on the one hand. or unseasonable and forced gaieties on the other. 'Tis a kind of profanation of things sacred, to treat so

give to the offer made them of the Gospel. But Christians might see that the notion is not only *improbable*, but impossible to be true, if the redemption of mankind was purchased by the death of Jesus, which is the gospel idea of his Religion. Nor is there any need of this opinion to discredit persecution. For the iniquity of that practice does not arise from restraining what God permits or delights in, but from usurping a jurisdiction over conscience, which belongs only to his tribunal.

solemn a matter as a generous voluntary suffering, with compliments, or heroic gallantries. Such a mind as your's has no need of being spirited up into honour, or like a weak woman, praised into an opinion of its own virtue. 'Tis enough to do and suffer what we ought; and men should know, that the noble power of suffering bravely is as far above that of enterprizing greatly, as an unblemish'd conscience and inflexible resolution are above an accidental flow of spirits, or a sudden tide of blood. If the whole religious business of mankind be included in resignation to our Maker, and charity to our fellow creatures, there are now some people who give us as good an opportunity of practising the one, as themselves have given an instance of the violation of the other. Whoever is really brave, has always this comfort when he is oppress'd, that he knows himself to be superior to those who injure him: for the greatest power on earth can no sooner do him that injury, but the brave man can make himself greater by forgiving it.

If it were generous to seek for alleviating consolations in a calamity of so much glory, one might say, that to be ruin'd thus in the gross, with a whole people, is but like perishing in the general conflagration, where nothing we can value is left behind us.

Methinks, the most heroic thing we are left capable of doing, is to endeavour to lighten each other's load, and (oppress'd as we are) to succour such as are yet more oppress'd. If there are too many who cannot be assisted but by what we cannot give, our money; there are yet others who may be relieved by our counsel, by our countenance, and even by our chearfulness. The

misfortunes of private families, the misunderstandings of people whom distresses make suspicious, the coldness of relations whom change of religion may disunite, or the necessities of half-ruined estates render unkind to each other; these at least may be softened in some degree, by a general well-managed humanity among ourselves; if all those who have your principles of belief, had also your sense and conduct. But indeed most of them have given lamentable proofs of the contrary; and 'tis to be apprehended that they who want sense, are only religious through weakness, and good-natur'd thro' shame. These are narrow-minded creatures that never deal in essentials, their faith never looks beyond ceremonials, nor their charity beyond relations. As poor as I am, I would gladly relieve any distressed, conscientious French refugee at this instant: what must my concern then be, when I perceive so many anxieties now tearing those hearts, which I have desired a place in, and clouds of melancholy rising on those faces, which I have long look'd upon with affection? I begin already to feel both what some apprehend, and what others are yet too stupid to apprehend. I grieve with the old, for many additional inconveniencies and chagrins, more than their small remain of life seemed destined to undergo; and with the young, for so many of those gaieties and pleasures (the portion of youth) which they will by this means be deprived of. This brings into my mind one or other of those I love best, and among them the widow and fatherless, late of. — As I am certain no people living had an earlier and truer sense of others misfortunes, or a more generous resignation as to what might be their own, so I earnestly wish that whatever part

they must bear, may be render'd as supportable to them, as it is in the power of any friend to make it.

But I know you have prevented me in this thought, as you always will in any thing that is good, or generous: I find by a letter of your lady's (which I have seen) that their ease and tranquillity is part of your care. I believe there's some fatality in it, that you should always, from time to time, be doing those particular things that make me enamour'd of you.

I write this from Windsor-Forest, of which I come to take my last look. We here bid our neighbours adieu, much as those who go to be hang'd do their fellow-prisoners who are condemn'd to follow them a few weeks after. I parted from honest Mr. D. with tenderness; and from old Sir William Trumbull as from a venerable prophet, foretelling with lifted hands the miseries to come, from which he is just going to be remov'd himself.

Perhaps, now I have learnt so far as
Nos dulcia linquimus arva,
 my next lesson may be

Nos Patriam fugimus.

Let that, and all else be as Heaven pleases! I have provided just enough to keep me a man of honour. I believe you and I shall never be ashamed of each other. I know I wish my Country well, and if it undoes me, it shall not make me wish it otherwise.

LETTER VII.

From Mr. BLOUNT.

March 24, 1715-16.

YOUR letters give me a gleam of satisfaction, in the midst of a very dark and cloudy situation of thoughts, which it would be more than human to be exempt from at this time, when our homes must either be left, or be made too narrow for us to turn in. Poetically speaking, I should lament the loss Windsor-forest and you sustain of each other, but that, methinks, one can't say you are parted, because you will live by and in one another, while verse is verse. This consideration hardens me in my opinion rather to congratulate you, since you have the pleasure of the prospect whenever you take it from your shelf, and at the same time the solid cash you sold it for, of which Virgil in his exile knew nothing in those days, and which will make every place easy to you. I for my part am not so happy; my *parva rura* are fasten'd to me, so that I can't exchange them, as you have, for more portable means of subsistence; and yet I hope to gather enough to make the *Patriam fugivus* supportable to me: 'tis what I am resolved on, with my *Penate*. If therefore you ask me, to whom you shall complain? I will exhort you to leave laziness and the elms of the St. James's Park, and choose to join the other two proposals in one, safety and friendship (the least of which is a good motive for most things, as the other is for al-

FROM EDW. BLOUNT, Esq. 19

most every thing) and go with me where War will not reach us, nor poultry Constables summon us to vestries.

The future epistle you flatter me with, will find me still here, and I think I may be here a month longer. Whenever I go from hence, one of the few reasons to make me regret my home will be, that I shall not have the pleasure of saying to you,

Hic tamen hanc mecum poteris requiescere noctem,
which would have render'd this place more agreeable, than ever it else could be to me; for I protest, it is with the utmost sincerity that I assure you, I am entirely,

Dear Sir,

Your, &c.

LETTER VIII.

June 22, 1717.

IF a regard both to public and private affairs may plead a lawful excuse in behalf of a negligent correspondent, I have really a very good title to it. I cannot say whether 'tis a felicity or unhappiness, that I am obliged at this time to give my whole application to Homer; when without that employment, my thoughts must turn upon what is less agreeable, the violence, madness, and resentment of modern War-makers⁶, which are likely to prove (to some people at least) more fatal, than the same qualities in Achilles did to his unfortunate country-men.

⁶ This was written in the year of the affair of Preston. P. III

Tho' the change of my scene of life, from Windsor-forest to the side of the Thames, be one of the grand Æra's of my days, and may be called a notable period in so inconsiderable a history; yet you can scarce imagine any hero passing from one stage of life to another, with so much tranquillity, so easy a transition, and so laudable a behaviour. I am become so truly a citizen of the world (according to Plato's expression) that I look with equal indifference on what I have left, and on what I have gained. The times and amusements past are not more like a dream to me, than those which are present: I lie in a refreshing kind of inaction, and have one comfort at least from obscurity, that the darkness helps me to sleep the better. I now and then reflect upon the enjoyment of my friends, whom, I fancy, I remember much as separate spirits do us, at tender intervals, neither interrupting their own employments, nor altogether careless of ours, but in general constantly wishing us well, and hoping to have us one day in their company.

To grow indifferent to the world is to grow philosophical, or religious (which soever of those turns we chance to take) and indeed the world is such a thing, as one that thinks pretty much, must either laugh at, or be angry with: but if we laugh at it, they say we are proud; and if we are angry with it, they say we are ill-natur'd. So the most politic way is to seem always better pleas'd than one can be, great admirers, greater lovers, and in short greater fools, than we really are: so shall we live comfortably with our families, quietly with our neighbours, favoured by our

masters, and happy with our mistresses. I have filled my paper, and so adieu.

LETTER IX.

Sept. 8, 1717.

I Think your leaving England was like a good man's leaving the world, with the blessed conscience of having acted well in it; and I hope you have received your reward, in being happy where you are. I believe, in the religious country you inhabit, you'll be better pleased to find I consider you in this light, than if I compared you to those Greeks and Romans, whose constancy in suffering pain, and whose resolution in pursuit of a generous end, you would rather imitate than boast of.

But I had a melancholy hint the other day, as if you were yet a martyr to the fatigue your virtue made you undergo on this side the water. I beg, if your health be restored to you, not to deny me the joy of knowing it. Your endeavours of service and good advice to the poor papists, put me in mind of Noah's preaching forty years to those folks that were to be drowned at last. At the worst I heartily wish your Ark may find an Arrarat, and the wife and family (the hopes of the good patriarch) land safely after the deluge, upon the shore of Totness.

If I durst mix prophane with sacred history, I would cheer you with the old tale of Brutus the wandering Trojan, who found on that very coast the happy end of his peregrinations and adventures.

I have very lately read Jeffery of Monmouth (to whom your Cornwall is not a little beholden) in the translation of a clergyman in my neighbourhood. The poor man is highly concerned to vindicate Jeffery's veracity as an historian; and told me he was perfectly astonished, we of the Roman communion could doubt of the legends of his Giants, while we believe those of our Saints. I am forced to make a fair composition with him; and, by crediting some of the wonders of Corinæus and Gogmagog, have brought him so far already, that he speaks respectfully of St. Christopher's carrying Christ, and the resuscitation of St. Nicholas Tolentine's chicken. Thus we proceed apace in converting each other from all manner of infidelity.

Ajax and Hector are no more to be compared to Corinæus and Arthur, than the Guelphs and Ghibellines are to the Mohocks of ever dreadful memory. This amazing writer has made me lay aside Homer for a week, and, when I take him up again, I shall be very well prepared to translate, with belief and reverence, the speech of Achilles's Horse.

You'll excuse all this trifling, or any thing else which prevents a sheet full of compliment: and believe there is nothing more true (even more true than any thing in Jeffery is false) than that I have a constant affection for you, and am, &c.

P. S. I know you will take part in rejoycing for the victory of Prince Eugene over the Turks, in the zeal you bear to the Christian interest, tho' your Cousin of Oxford (with whom I dined yesterday) says,

there is no other difference in the Christians beating the Turks, or the Turks beating the Christians, than whether the Emperor shall first declare war against Spain, or Spain declare it against the Emperor.

LETTER X.

Nov. 27, 1717.

THE question you proposed to me is what at present I am the most unfit man in the world to answer, by my loss of one of the best of Fathers.

He had lived in such a course of Temperance as was enough to make the longest life agreeable to him, and in such a course of Piety as sufficed to make the most sudden death so also. Sudden indeed it was: however, I heartily beg of God to give me such a one, provided I can lead such a life. I leave him to the mercy of God, and to the piety of a religion that extends beyond the grave: *Si qua est ea cura, &c.*

He has left me to the ticklish management of so narrow a fortune, that any one false step would be fatal. My mother is in that dispirited state of resignation, which is the effect of long life, and the loss of what is dear to us. We are really each of us in want of a friend, of such an humane turn as yourself, to make almost any thing desirable to us. I feel your absence more than ever, at the same time I can less express my regards to you than ever; and shall make this, which is the most sincere letter I ever writ to you, the shortest and faintest perhaps of any you have

received. 'Tis enough if you reflect, that barely to remember any person when one's mind is taken up with a sensible sorrow, is a great degree of friendship. I can say no more but that I love you, and all that are yours; and that I wish it may be very long before any of yours shall feel for you what I now feel for my father. Adieu.

LETTER XI.

Rentcomb in Gloucestershire, Oct. 3, 1721.

YOUR kind letter has overtaken me here, for I have been in and about this country ever since your departure. I am well pleased to date this from a place so well known to Mrs. Blount, where I write as if I were dictated to by her ancestors, whose faces are all upon me. I fear none so much as Sir Christopher Guise, who, being in his shirt, seems as ready to combat me, as her own Sir John was to demolish Duke Lancastere. I dare say your lady will recollect his figure. I look'd upon the mansion, walls, and terraces; the plantations, and slopes, which nature has made to command a variety of valleys and rising woods; with a veneration mix'd with a pleasure, that represented her to me in those puerile amusements, which engaged her so many years ago in this place. I fancied I saw her sober over a sampler, or gay over a jointed baby. I dare say she did one thing more, even in those early times; „remember'd her Creator in the „days of her youth.“

You describe so well your herinitical state of life, that none of the ancient anchorites could go beyond you, for a cave in a rock, with a fine spring, or any of the accommodations that besit a solitary. Only I don't remember to have read, that any of those venerable and holy personages took with them a lady, and begat sons and daughters. You must modestly be content to be accounted a patriarch. But were you a little younger, I should rather rank you with Sir Amadis, and his fellows. If Piety be so romantic, I shall turn hermit in good earnest; for, I see, one may go so far as to be poetical, and hope to save one's soul at the same time. I really wish myself something more, that is, a prophet; for I wish I were, as Habbakkuk, to be taken by the hair of his head, and visit Daniel in his den. You are very obliging in saying, I have now a whole family upon my hands to whom to discharge the part of a friend; I assure you, I like them all so well, that I will never quit my hereditary right to them; you have made me yours, and consequently them mine; I still see them walking on my green at Twickenham, and gratefully remember, not only their green-gowns, but the instructions they gave me how to slide down and trip up the steepest slopes of my mount.

Pray think of me sometimes, as I shall often of you; and know me for what I am, that is,

Your, &c.

LETTER XII.

Oct. 21, 1721.

YOUR very kind and obliging manner of enquiring after me, among the first concerns of life, at your refuscitation, should have been sooner answer'd and acknowledged. I sincerely rejoice at your recovery from an illness which gave me less pain than it did you, only from my ignorance of it. I should have else been seriously and deeply afflicted, in the thought of your danger by a fever. I think it a fine and a natural thought, which I lately read in a letter of Montaigne's published by P. Coste, giving an account of the last words of an intimate friend of his: „Adieu, my friend! the pain I feel will soon be over; „but I grieve for that you are to feel, which is to last „you for life.“

I join with your family in giving God thanks for lending us a worthy man somewhat longer. The comforts you receive from their attendance, put me in mind of what old Fletcher of Saltroune said one day to me. „Alas, I have nothing to do but to die; I am a „poor individual; no creature to wish, or to fear, for „my life or death: 'Tis the only reason I have to repent being a single man; now I grow old, I am like „a tree without a prop, and without young trees to „grow round me, for company and defence.“

I hope the gout will soon go after the fever, and all evil things remove far from you. But pray tell me, when will you move towards us? If you had an inter-

val to get hither, I care not what fixes you afterwards except the gout. Pray come, and never stir from us again. Do away your dirty acres, cast them to dirty people, such as in the scripture-phrase possess the land. Shake off your earth like the noble animal in Milton,

*The tawny lyon, pawing to get free
His hinder parts, he springs as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brinded main: the ounce,
The lizzard, and the tiger, as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks!*

But, I believe, Milton never thought these fine verses of his should be apply'd to a man selling a parcel of dirty acres; tho' in the main, I think it may have some resemblance. For, God knows! this little space of ground nourishes, buries, and confines us, as that of Eden did those creatures, till we can shake it loose, at least in our affections and desires.

Believe, dear Sir, I truly love and value you: let Mrs. Blount know that she is in the list of my *Memento, Domine, famulorum famularumque's*, &c. My poor mother is far from well, declining; and I am watching over her, as we watch an expiring taper, that even when it looks brightest, wastes fastest. I am (as you will see from the whole air of this letter) not in the gayest nor easiest humour, but always with sincerity,

Your, &c.

LETTER XIII.

June 27, 1723.

YOU may truly do me the justice to think no man is more your sincere well-wisher than myself, or more the sincere well-wisher of your whole family; with all which, I cannot deny but I have a mixture of envy to you all, for loving one another so well; and for enjoying the sweets of that life, which can only be tasted by people of good-will.

*They from all shades the darkness can exclude,
And from a desert banish solitude.*

Torbay is a paradise, and a storm is but an amusement to such people. If you drink Tea upon a promontory that over-hangs the sea, it is preferable to an Assembly: and the whistling of the wind better music to contented and loving minds, than the Opera to the spleenful, ambitious, diseas'd, distast'd, and distracted souls which this world affords; nay, this world affords no other. Happy they, who are banish'd from us! but happier they, who can banish themselves; or more properly banish the world from them!

Alas! I live at Twickenham!

I take that period to be very sublime, and to include more than a hundred sentences that might be writ to express distraction, hurry, multiplication of nothings, and all the fatiguing perpetual business of having no business to do. You'll wonder I reckon translating the

Odyſſey as nothing. But whenever I think ſeriouſly (and of late I have met with ſo many occaſions of thinking ſeriouſly, that I begin never to think otherwiſe) I cannot but think theſe things very idle; as idle as if a beaſt of burden ſhould go on ginging his bells, without bearing any thing valuable about him, or ever ſerving his maſter.

Life's vain Amuſements, amidſt which we dwell;

Not weigh'd, or underſtood, by the grim God of Hell!

ſaid a heathen poet; as he is tranſlated by a chriſtian Biſhop, who has, firſt by his exhortations, and ſince by his example, taught me to think as becomes a reaſonable creature — but he is gone!

I remember I promis'd to write to you, as ſoon as I ſhould hear you were got home. You muſt look on this as the firſt day I've been myſelf, and paſs over the mad interval un-imputed to me. How punctual a cor- reſpondent I ſhall hence-forward be able or not able to be, God knows: but he knows, I ſhall ever be a punctual and grateful friend, and all the good wiſhes of ſuch an one will ever attend you.

LETTER XIV.

Twick'nam, June 2. 1725.

YOU ſhew yourſelf a juſt man and a friend in thoſe gueſſes and ſuppoſitions you make at the poſſible reaſons of my ſilence; every one of which is a true one. As to forgetfulneſs of you, or yours, I

assure you, the promiscuous conversations of the town serve only to put me in mind of better, and more quiet, to be had in a corner of the world (undisturb'd, innocent, serene, and sensible) with such as you. Let no access of any distrust make you think of me differently in a cloudy day from what you do in the most sunshiny weather. Let the young ladies be assured I make nothing new in my gardens without wishing to see the print of their fairy steps in every part of them. I have put the last hand to my works of this kind, in happily finishing the subterraneous way and grotto: I there found a spring of the clearest water, which falls in a perpetual rill, that echoes thro' the cavern day and night. From the river Thames, you see thro' my arch up a walk of the wilderness, to a kind of open Temple, wholly compos'd of shells in the rustic manner; and from that distance under the temple you look down thro' a sloping arcade of trees, and see the sails on the river passing suddenly and vanishing, as thro' a perspective glass. When you shut the doors of this grotto, it becomes on the instant, from a luminous room, a *Camera obscura*; on the walls of which all the objects of the river, hills, woods, and boats, are forming a moving picture in their visible radiations: and when you have a mind to light it up, it affords you a very different scene; it is finished with shells interspersed with pieces of looking-glass in angular forms; and in the cieling is a star of the same material, at which when a lamp (of an orbicular figure of thin alabaster) is hung in the middle, a thousand pointed rays glitter, and are reflected over the place. There are connected to this grotto by a narrower pas-

face two porches, one towards the river of smooth stones full of light, and open; the other toward the Garden shadow'd with trees, rough with shells, flints, and iron-ore. The bottom is paved with simple pebble, as is also the adjoining walk up the wilderness to the temple, in the natural taste, agreeing not ill with the little dripping murmur, and the aquatic idea of the whole place. It wants nothing to complete it but a good statue with an inscription, like that beautiful antique one which you know I am so fond of,

Hujus Nympha loci, sacri custodia fontis,

Dormio, dum blandæ sentio murmur aquæ.

Parce meum, quisquis tangis cava marmora, somnum

Rumpere; si bibas, sive lavere, tace.

Nymph of the grot, these sacred springs I keep,

And to the murmur of these waters sleep;

Ah spare my slumbers, gently tread the cave!

And drink in silence, or in silence lave!

You'll think I have been very poetical in this description, but it is pretty near the truth ⁷. I wish you were here to bear testimony how little it owes to Art, either the place itself, or the image I give of it.

I am, &c.

⁷ He had greatly enlarged and improved this Grotto not long before his death: and, by incrusting it about with a vast number of ores and minerals of the richest and rarest kinds, had made it one of the most elegant and romantic retirements that was any where to be seen. He has made it the subject of a very pretty poem of a singular cast and composition.

LETTER XV.

Sept. 13, 1725.

I Should be ashamed to own the receipt of a very kind of letter from you, two whole months from the date of this ; if I were not more ashamed to tell a lye , or to make an excuse , which is worse than a lye (for being built upon some probable circumstance , it makes use of a degree of truth to falsify with, and is a lye guarded.) Your letter has been in my pocket in constant wearing, till that, and the pocket, and the suit , are worn out ; by which means I have read it forty times, and I find by so doing that I have not enough considered and reflected upon many others you have obliged me with ; for true friendship , as they say of good writing, will bear reviewing a thousand times , and still discover new beauties.

I have had a fever, a short one, but a violent : I am now well ; so it shall take up no more of this paper.

I begin now to expect you in town to make the winter to come more tolerable to us both. The summer is a kind of heaven, when we wander in a paradisaical scene among groves and gardens ; but at this season, we are, like our poor first parents, turn'd out of that agreeable though solitary life, and forced to look about for more people to help to bear our labours, to get into warmer houses, and live together in cities.

I hope you are long since perfectly restor'd , and risen from your gout, happy in the delights of a contented family, smiling at storms, laughing at greatness,

merry over a christmas-fire, and exercising all the functions of an old Patriarch in charity and hospitality. I will not tell Mrs. B* what I think she is doing; for I conclude it is her opinion, that he only ought to know it for whom it is done; and she will allow herself to be far enough advanced above a fine lady, not to desire to shine before men.

Your daughters perhaps may have some other thoughts, which even their mother must excuse them for, because she is a mother. I will not however suppose those thoughts get the better of their devotions, but rather excite them and assist the warmth of them; while their prayer may be, that they may raise up and breed as irreproachable a young family as their parents have done. In a word, I fancy you all well, easy, and happy, just as I wish you; and next to that, I wish you all with me.

Next to God, is a good man: next in dignity, and next in value. *Minuisti eum paullo minus ab angelis.* If therefore I wish well to the good and the deserving, and desire they only should be my companions and correspondents, I must very soon and very much think of you. I want your company, and your example. Pray make haste to town, so as not again to leave us: discharge the load of earth that lies on you, like one of the mountains under which, the poets say, the giants (the men of the earth) are whelmed: leave earth, to the sons of the earth, your conversation is in heaven. Which that it may be accomplish'd in us all, is the prayer of him who maketh this short Sermon; value (to you) three-pence. Adieu.

Mr. Blount died in London the following Year 1726. P.

LETTERS

TO AND FROM THE

Hon. ROBERT DIGBY.

From 1714 to 1727.

LETTER I.

To the Hon. ROBERT DIGBY.

June 2, 1717.

I Had pleas'd myself sooner in writing to you, but that I have been your successor in a fit of sickness, and am not yet so much recovered, but that I have thoughts of using your 8 physicians. They are as grave persons as any of the faculty, and (like the ancients) carry their own medicaments about with them. But indeed the moderns are such lovers of raillery, that nothing is grave enough to escape them. Let them laugh, but people will still have their opinions: as they think our Doctors asses to them, we'll think them asses to our Doctors.

I am glad you are so much in a better state of health, as to allow me to jest about it. My concern, when I heard of your danger, was so very serious, that

I almost take it ill Dr. Evans should tell you of it, or you mention it. I tell you fairly, if you and a few more such people were to leave the world, I would not give sixpence to stay in it.

I am not so much concerned as to the point whether you are to live fat or lean: most men of wit or honesty are usually decreed to live very lean, so I am inclined to the opinion that 'tis decreed you shall; however be comforted, and reflect, that you'll make the better Busto for it.

'Tis something particular in you, not to be satisfied with sending me your own books, but to make your acquaintance continue the frolic. Mr. Wharton forced me to take Gorboduc, which has since done me great credit with several people, as it has done Dryden and Oldham some dis-kindness, in shewing there is as much difference between their Gorboduc and this, as between Queen Anne, and King George. It is truly a scandal, that men should write with contempt of a piece which they never once saw, as those two Poets did, who were ignorant even of the sex, as well as sense, of Gorboduc 9.

Adieu! I am going to forget you: this minute you took up all my mind; the next I shall think of nothing but the reconciliation with Agamemnon, and the recovery of Briseis. I shall be Achilles's humble servant these two months (with the good leave of all my friends.) I have no ambition so strong at present, as that noble one of Sir Salathiel Lovel, recorder of Lon-

9 There is a correct edition of it in that valuable collection of old Plays published by Doddsley.

don, to furnish out a decent and plentiful execution, of Greeks and Trojans. It is not to be express'd how heartily I wish the death of all Homer's heroes, one after another. The Lord preserve me in the day of battle, which is just approaching! join in your prayers for me, and know me to be always

Your, &c.

LETTER II.

London, March 31, 1718.

TO convince you how little pain I give myself in corresponding with men of good nature and good understanding, you see I omit to answer your letters till a time, when another man would be ashamed to own he had received them. If therefore you are ever moved on my account by that spirit, which I take to be as familiar to you as a quotidian ague, I mean the spirit of goodness, pray never stint it, in any fear of obliging me to a civility beyond my natural inclination. I dare trust you, Sir, not only with my folly when I write, but with my negligence when I do not; and expect equally your pardon for either.

If I knew how to entertain you thro' the rest of this paper, it should be spotted and diversified with conceits all over; you should be put out of breath with laughter at each sentence, and pause at each period, to look back over how much wit you have passed. But I have found by experience that people now-a-days regard writing as little as they do preaching: the most

we can hope is to be heard just with decency and patience, once a week, by folks in the country. Here in town we hum over a piece of fine writing, and we whistle at a sermon. The stage is the only place we seem alive at; there indeed we stare, and roar, and clap hands for K. George; and the government. As for all other virtues but this loyalty, they are an obsolete train, so ill-dress'd, that men, women, and children hiss them out of all good company. Humility knocks so sneakingly at the door that every footman outraps it, and makes it give way to the free entrance of pride, prodigality, and vain-glory.

My Lady Scudamore, from having rusticated in your company too long, really behaves herself scandalously among us: she pretends to open her eyes for the sake of seeing the sun, and to sleep because it is night; drinks tea at nine in the morning, and is thought to have said her prayers before; talks, without any manner of shame, of good books, and has not seen Cibber's play of the Non-juror. I rejoiced the other day to see a libel on her toilette, which gives me some hope that you have, at least, a taste of scandal left you, in defect of all other vices.

Upon the whole matter, I heartily wish you well; but as I cannot entirely desire the ruin of all the joys of this city, so all that remains is to wish you would keep your happiness to yourselves, that the happiest here may not die with envy at a bliss which they cannot attain to.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

From Mr. DIGBY.

Coleshill, April 17, 1718.

I Have read your letter over and over with delight. By your description of the town, I imagine it to lie under some great enchantment, and am very much concerned for you and all my friends in it. I am the more afraid, imagining, since you do not fly those horrible monsters, rapine, dissimulation, and luxury, that a magic circle is drawn about you, and you cannot escape. We are here in the country in quite another world, surrounded with blessings and pleasures, without any occasion of exercising our irascible faculties; indeed we cannot boast of good-breeding and the art of life, but yet we don't live unpleasantly in primitive simplicity and good-humour. The fashions of the town affect us but just like a raree-show, we have a curiosity to peep at them, and nothing more. What you call pride, prodigality, and vain-glory, we cannot find in pomp and splendor at this distance; it appears to us a fine glittering scene, which if we don't envy you, we think you happier than we are, in your enjoying it. Whatever you may think to persuade us of the humility of Virtue, and her appearing in rags amongst you, we can never believe: our uninform'd minds represent her so noble to us, that we necessarily annex splendor to her: and we could as soon imagine the order of things inverted, and that there is no man

in the moon, as believe the contrary. I can't forbear telling you we indeed read the spoils of Rapine as boys do the English rogue, and hug ourselves full as much over it; yet our roses are not without thorns. Pray give me the pleasure of hearing (when you are at leisure) how soon I may expect to see the next volume of Homer.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

May 1, 1720.

You'll think me very full of myself, when after long silence (which however, to say truth, has rather been employed to contemplate of you, than to forget you) I begin to talk of my own works. I find it is in the finishing a book, as in concluding a session of Parliament, one always thinks it will be very soon, and finds it very late. There are many unlook'd-for incidents to retard the clearing any public account, and so I see it is in mine. I have plagued myself, like great ministers, with undertaking too much for one man; and with a desire of doing more than was expected from me, have done less than I ought.

For having design'd four very laborious and uncommon sort of Indexes to Homer, I'm forc'd, for want of time, to publish two only; the design of which you will own to be pretty, tho' far from being fully executed. I've also been obliged to leave unfinish'd in my desk the heads of two Essays, one on the Theology

and Morality of Homer, and another on the Oratory of Homer and Virgil. So they must wait for future editions, or perish: and (one way or other, no great matter which) *dabit Deus his quoque finem*. I think of you every day, I assure you, even without such good memorials of you as your sisters, with whom I sometimes talk of you, and find it one of the most agreeable of all subjects to them. My Lord Digby must be perpetually remember'd by all who ever knew him, or knew his children. There needs no more than an acquaintance with your family, to make all elder sons wish they had fathers to their lives end.

I can't touch upon the subject of filial love, without putting you in mind of an old woman, who has a sincere, hearty, old-fashion'd respect for you, and constantly blames her son for not having writ to you oftener to tell you so.

I very much wish (but what signifies my wishing? my lady Scudamore wishes, your sisters wish) that you were with us, to compare the beautiful contrast this season affords us, of the town and the country. No ideas you could form in the winter can make you imagine what Twickenham is (and what your friend Mr. Johnson of Twickenham is) in this warmer season. Our river glitters beneath an unclouded sun, at the same time that its banks retain the verdure of showers: our gardens are offering their first nosegays; our trees, like new acquaintance brought happily together, are stretching their arms to meet each other, and growing nearer and nearer every hour; the birds are paying their thanksgiving songs for the new habitations I have made them; my building rises high enough to attract

the eye and curiosity of the passenger from the river, where, upon beholding a mixture of beauty and ruin, he enquires what house is falling, or what church is rising? So little taste have our common Tritons of Vitruvius; whatever delight the poetical gods of the river may take, in reflecting on their streams, my Tuscan Porticos, or Ionic Pilasters.

But (to descend from all this pomp of style) the best account of what I am building, is, that it will afford me a few pleasant rooms for such a friend as yourself, or a cool situation for an hour or two for Lady Scudamore, when she will do me the honour (at this public house on the road) to drink her own cyder.

The moment I am writing this, I am surprized with the account of the death of a friend of mine; which makes all I have here been talking of, a mere jest! Building, gardens, writings, pleasures, works, of whatever stuff man can raise! none of them (God knows) capable of advantaging a creature that is mortal, or of satisfying a soul that is immortal! Dear Sir,

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

From Mr. DIGBY.

May 21, 1720.

YOUR letter, which I had two posts ago, was very medicinal to me; and I heartily thank you for the relief it gave me. I was sick of the thoughts of

my not having in all this time given you any testimony of the affection I owe you, and which I as constantly indeed feel as I think of you. This indeed was a troublesome ill to me, till, after reading your letter, I found it was a most idle weak imagination to think I could so offend you. Of all the impressions you have made upon me, I never receiv'd any with greater joy than this of your abundant good-nature, which bids me be assured of some share of your affections.

I had many other pleasures from your letter; that your mother remembers me is a very sincere joy to me; I cannot but reflect how alike you are; from the time you do any one a favour, you think yourselves obliged as those that have received one. This is indeed an oldfashioned respect, hardly to be found out of your house. I have great hopes however, to see many old-fashioned virtues revive, since you have made our age in love with Homer; I heartily wish you, who are as good a citizen as a poet, the joy of seeing a reformation from your works. I am in doubt whether I should congratulate your having finished Homer, while the two essays you mention are not completed; but if you expect no great trouble from finishing these, I heartily rejoice with you.

I have some faint notion of the beauties of Twickenham from what I here see round me. The verdure of showers is poured upon every tree and field about us; the gardens unfold variety of colours to the eye every morning, the hedges breath is beyond all perfume, and the song of birds we hear as well as you. But tho' I hear and see all this, yet I think they would delight me more if you was here. I found the want

of these at Twickenham while I was there with you, by which I guess what an increase of charms it must now have. How kind is it in you to wish me there, and how unfortunate are my circumstances that allow me not to visit you? If I see you, I must leave my Father alone; and this uneasy thought would disappoint all my proposed pleasures; the same circumstance will prevent my prospect of many happy hours with you in Lord Bathurst's wood, and I fear of seeing you till winter, unless Lady Scudamore comes to Sherburne, in which case I shall press you to see Dorsetshire, as you proposed. May you have a long enjoyment of your new favourite Portico.

Your, &c.

LETTER VI.

From Mr. DIGBY.

Sherburne, July 9, 1720.

THE London language and conversation is, I find, quite changed since I left it, tho' it is not above three or four months ago. No violent change in the natural world ever astonished a Philosopher so much as this does me. I hope this will calm all Party-rage, and introduce more humanity than has of late obtained in conversation. All scandal will sure be laid aside, for there can be no such disease any more as Spleen in this new golden age. I am pleased with the thoughts of seeing nothing but a general good humour when I come up to town; I rejoice in the universal riches I hear

of, in the thought of their having this effect. They tell me you was soon content ; and that you cared not for such an increase as others wished you. By this account I judge you the richest man in the South-sea, and congratulate you accordingly. I can wish you only an increase of health, for of riches and fame you have enough.

Your, &c.

LETTER VII.

July 20, 1720.

YOUR kind desire to know the state of my health had not been unsatisfied so long, had not that ill state been the impediment. Nor should I have seem'd an unconcern'd party in the joys of your family, which I heard of from lady Scudamore, whose short Eschantillon of a letter (of a quarter of a page) I value as the short glympse of a vision afforded to some devout hermit; for it includes (as those revelations do) a promise of a better life in the Elysian groves of Cironcester, whither, I could say almost in the style of a sermon, the Lord bring us all, &c. Thither may we tend, by various ways, to one blissful bower: thither may health, peace, and good humour wait upon us as associates: thither may whole cargoes of nectar (liquor of life and longevity!) by mortals call'd spaw-water, be convey'd; and there (as Milton has it) may we, like the deities,

*On flow'rs repos'd, and with fresh garlands crown'd,
Quaff immortality and joy.*

When I speak of garlands, I should not forget the green vestments and scarfs which your sisters promis'd to make for this purpose: I expect you too in green, with a hunting-horn by your side and a green hat, the model of which you may take from Osborne's description of King James the first.

What words, what numbers, what oratory, or what poetry, can suffice, to express how infinitely I esteem, value, love, and desire you all, above all the great ones of this part of the world; above all the Jews, jobbers, bubblers, subscribers, projectors, directors, governors, treasurers, &c. &c. &c. *in secula seculorum.*

Turn your eyes and attention from this miserable mercenary period: and turn yourself, in a just contempt of these sons of Mammon, to the contemplation of books, gardens, and marriage: in which I now leave you, and return (wretch that I am!) to water-gruel and Palladio.

I am, &c.

LETTER VIII.

From Mr. DIGBY.

Sherburne, July 30.

I Congratulate you, dear Sir, on the return of the Golden-age, for sure this must be such, in which money is shower'd down in such abundance upon us. I hope this overflowing will produce great and good fruits, and bring back the figurative moral golden-age

to us. I have some omens to induce me to believe it may; for when the Muses delight to be near a Court, when I find you frequently with a Firstminister, I can't but expect from such an intimacy an encouragement and revival of the polite arts. I know, you desire to bring them into honour, above the golden Image which is set up and worshipped, and, if you cannot effect it, adieu to all such hopes. You seem to intimate in yours another face of things from this inundation of wealth, as if beauty, wit, and valour would no more engage our passions in the pleasurable pursuit of them, tho' assisted by this encrease: if so, and if monsters only as various as those of Nile arise from this abundance, who that has any spleen about him will not haste to town to laugh? What will become of the playhouse? who will go thither, while there is such entertainment in the streets? I hope we shall neither want good Satire nor Comedy; if we do, the age may well be thought barren of genius's, for none has ever produced better subjects.

Your, &c.

LETTER IX.

From Mr. DIGBY.

Colehill, Nov. 12, 1720.

I Find in my heart that I have a taint of the corrupt age we live in. I want the public Spirit so much admired in old Rome, of sacrificing every thing that is dear to us to the common-wealth. I even feel a mo-

re intimate concern for my friends who have suffered in the S. Sea, than for the public, which is said to be undone by it. But, I hope, the reason is, that I do not see so evidently the ruin of the public to be a consequence of it, as I do the loss of my friends. I fear there are few besides yourself that will be persuaded by old Hesiod, that *half is more than the whole*. I know not whether I do not rejoyce in your Sufferings ¹⁰; since they have shewn me your mind is principled with such a sentiment, I assure you I expect from it a performance greater still than Homer. I have an extreme joy from your communicating to me this affection of your mind;

Quid voveat dulci Nutricula majus alumno?

Believe me, dear Sir, no equipage could shew you to my eye in so much splendor. I would not indulge this fit of philosophy so far as to be tedious to you, else I could prosecute it with pleasure.

I long to see you, your Mother, and your Villa; till then I will say nothing of Lord Bathurst's wood, which I saw in my return hither. Soon after Christmas I design for London, where I shall miss Lady Scudamore very much, who intends to stay in the country all winter. I am angry with her, as I am like to suffer by this resolution, and would fain blame her, but cannot find a cause. The man is cursed that has a longer letter than this to write with as bad a pen, yet I can use it with pleasure to send my services to your good mother, and to write myself

Your, &c.

¹⁰ See Note on v. 139. of the second Satire, ii. Book of Horace.

LETTER X.

Sept. 1, 1722.

DOCTOR Arbuthnot is going to Bath, and will stay there a fortnight or more: perhaps you would be comforted to have a sight of him, whether you need him or not. I think him as good a Doctor as any man for one that is ill, and a better Doctor for one that is well. He would do admirably for Mrs. Mary Digby: she needed only to follow his hints, to be in eternal business and amusement of mind, and even as active as she could desire. But indeed I fear she would outwalk him; for (as Dean Swift observ'd to me the very first time I saw the Doctor) „He is a man that can do „every thing but walk.“ His brother, who is lately come into England, goes also to the Bath; and is a more extraordinary man than he, worth your going thither on purpose to know him. The spirit of Philanthropy, so long dead to our world, is reviv'd in him: he is a philosopher all of fire; so warmly, nay so wildly in the right, that he forces all others about him to be so too, and draws them into his own Vortex. He is a star that looks as if it were all fire, but is all benignity, all gentle and beneficial influence. If there be other men in the world that would serve a friend, yet he is the only one, I believe, that could make even an enemy serve a friend.

As all human life is chequer'd and mixed with acquisitions and losses (tho' the latter are more certain and irremediable, than the former lasting or satisfactory)

so at the time I have gain'd the acquaintance of one worthy man I have lost another, a very easy, humane, and gentlemanly neighbour, Mr. Stonor. 'Tis certain the loss of one of this character puts us naturally upon setting a greater value on the few that are left, tho' the degree of our esteem may be different. Nothing, says Seneca, is so melancholy a circumstance in human life, or so soon reconciles us to the thought of our own death, as the reflection and prospect of one friend after another dropping round us ! Who would stand alone, the sole remaining ruin, the last tottering column of all the fabric of friendship ; once so large, seemingly so strong, and yet so suddenly sunk and buried ?

I am, &c.

LETTER XI.

I Have belief enough in the goodness of your whole family, to think you will all be pleas'd that I am arriv'd in safety at Twickenham ; tho' it is a sort of earnest that you will be troubled again with me, at Sherburne, or Colehill ; for however I may like one of your places, it may be in that as in liking one of your family ; when one sees the rest, one likes them all. Pray make my services acceptable to them ; I wish them all the happiness they may want, and the continuance of all the happiness they have ; and I take the latter to comprize a great deal more than the former. I must separate Lady Scudamore from you, as, I fear,

she will do herself before this letter reaches you: so I wish her a good journey, and I hope one day to try if she lives as well as you do: tho' I much question if she can live as quietly: I suspect the Bells will be ringing at her arrival, and on her own and Miss Scudamore's birth-days, and that all the Clergy in the country come to pay respects; both the Clergy and their Bells expecting from her, and from the young Lady, further business and further employment. Besides all this, there dwells on the one side of her the Lord Conningby, and on the other Mr. W*. Yet I shall, when the days and the years come about, adventure upon all this for her sake.

I beg my Lord Digby to think me a better man than to content myself with thanking him in the common way. I am in as sincere a sense of the word, his servant, as you are his son, or he your father.

I must in my turn insist upon hearing how my last fellow-travellers got home from Clarendon, and desire Mr. Philips to remember me in his Cyder, and to tell Mr. W* that I am dead and buried.

I wish the young Ladies, whom I almost robb'd of their good name, a better name in return (even that very name to each of them, which they shall like best, for the sake of the man that bears it.)

Yours, &c.



LETTER XII.

1722.

YOUR making a sort of apology for your not writing, is a very genteel reproof to me. I know I was to blame, but I know I did not intend to be so, and (what is the happiest knowledge in the world) I know you will forgive me: for sure nothing is more satisfactory than to be certain of such a friend as will overlook one's failings, since every such instance is a conviction of his kindness.

If I am all my life to dwell in intentions, and never to rise to actions, I have but too much need of that gentle disposition which I experience in you. But I hope better things of myself, and fully purpose to make you a visit this summer at Sherburne. I'm told you are all upon removal very speedily, and that Mrs. Mary Digby talks in a letter to Lady Scudamore, of seeing my Lord Bathurst's wood in her way. How much I wish to be her guide thro' that enchanted forest, is not to be expressed: I look upon myself as the magician appropriated to the place, without whom no mortal can penetrate into the recesses of those sacred shades. I could pass whole days, in only describing to her the future, and as yet visionary beauties, that are to rise in those scenes: the palace that is to be built, the pavillions that are to glitter, the colonades that are to adorn them: nay more, the meeting of the Thames and the Severn, which (when the noble owner has finer dreams than ordinary) are to be led into each other's embraces thro' secret caverns of

not above twelve or fifteen miles, till they rise and celebrate their marriage in the midst of an immense amphitheatre, which is to be the admiration of posterity, a hundred years hence. But till the destin'd time shall arrive that is to manifest these wonders, Mrs. Digby must content herself with seeing what is at present no more than the finest wood in England.

The objects that attract this part of the world, are of a quite different nature. Women of quality are all turn'd followers of the camp in Hyde-park this year, whither all the town resort to magnificent entertainments given by the officers, &c. The Scythian Ladies that dwelt in the waggons of war, were not more closely attached to the luggage. The matrons, like those of Sparta, attend their sons to the field, to be the witnesses of their glorious deeds; and the maidens with all their charms display'd, provoke the spirit of the Soldiers: Tea and Coffee supply the place of Lacedemonian black broth. This Camp seems crown'd with perpetual victory, for every gun that rises in the thunder of cannon, sets in the music of violins. Nothing is yet wanting but the constant presence of the Princess, to represent the *Mater Exercitus*.

At Twickenham the world goes otherwise. There are certain old people who take up all my time, and will hardly allow me to keep any other company. They were introduced here by a man of their own sort, who has made me perfectly rude to all contemporaries, and won't so much as suffer me to look upon them. The person I complain of is the Bishop of Rochester. Yet he allows me (from something he has heard of your character and that of your family, as if you were of the

old sect of moralists) to write three or four sides of paper to you, and to tell you (what these sort of people never tell but with truth and religious sincerity) that I am, and ever will be,

Your, &c.

LETTER XIII.

THE same reason that hinder'd your writing, hinder'd mine, the pleasing expectation to see you in town. Indeed since the willing confinement I have lain under here with my mother (whom it is natural and reasonable I should rejoice with, as well as grieve) I could the better bear your absence from London, for I could hardly have seen you there; and it would not have been quite reasonable to have drawn you to a sick room hither from the first embraces of your friends. My mother is now (I thank God) wonderfully recovered, tho' not so much as yet to venture out of her chamber, but enough to enjoy a few particular friends, when they have the good nature to look upon her. I may recommend to you the room we sit in, upon one (and that a favourite) account, that it is the very warmest in the house; we and our fires will equally smile upon your face. There is a Persian proverb that says (I think very prettily) „The conversation of a friend „brightens the eyes.“ This I take to be a splendor still more agreeable than the fires you so delightfully describe.

That you may long enjoy your own fire-side in the metaphorical sense, that is, all those of your family who

make it pleasing to sit and spend whole wintry months together (a far more rational delight, and better felt by an honest heart, than all the glaring entertainments, numerous lights, and false splendors, of an Assembly of empty heads, aking hearts, and false faces.) This is my sincere wish to you and yours.

You say you propose much pleasure in seeing some few faces about town of my acquaintance. I guess you mean Mrs. Howard's and Mrs. Blount's. And I assure you, you ought to take as much pleasure in their hearts, if they are what they sometimes express with regard to you.

Believe me, dear Sir, to you all, a very faithful servant.

LETTER XIV.

From Mr. DIGBY.

Sherburne, Aug. 14, 1723.

I Can't return from so agreeable an entertainment as yours in the country, without acknowledging it. I thank you heartily for the new agreeable idea of life you there gave me; it will remain long with me, for it is very strongly impressed upon my imagination. I repeat the memory of it often, and shall value that faculty of the mind now more than ever, for the power it gives me of being entertained in your villa, when absent from it. As you are possessed of all the pleasures of the country, and, as I think, of a right mind, what can I

wish you but health to enjoy them? This I so heartily do, that I should be even glad to hear your good old mother might lose all her present pleasures in her unwearied care of you, by your better health convincing them it is unnecessary.

I am troubled and shall be so till I hear you have receiv'd this letter: for you gave me the greatest pleasure imaginable in yours, and I am impatient to acknowledge it. If I any ways deserve that friendly warmth and affection with which you write, it is, that I have a heart full of love and esteem for you: so truly, that I should lose the greatest pleasure of my life if I lost your good opinion. It rejoices me very much to be reckoned by you in the class of honest men; for tho' I am not troubled overmuch about the opinion most may have of me, yet, I own, it would grieve me not to be thought well of, by you and some few others. I will not doubt my own strength, yet I have this further security to maintain my integrity, that I cannot part with that, without forfeiting your esteem with it.

Perpetual disorder and ill health have for some years so disguised me, that, I sometimes fear I do not to my best friends enough appear what I really am. Sicknefs is a great oppressor; it does great injury to a zealous heart, stifling its warmth, and not suffering it to break out in action. But, I hope, I shall not make this complaint much longer. I have other hopes that please me too, tho' not so well grounded; these are, that you may yet make a journey westward with Lord Bathurst; but of the probability of this I do not venture to reason, because I would not part with the pleasure of that belief. It grieves me to think how far I am removed from you,

and from that excellent Lord, whom I love! Indeed I remember him, as one that has made sickness easy to me, by bearing with my infirmities in the same manner that you have always done. I often too consider him in other lights that make him valuable to me. With him, I know not by what connection, you never fail to come into my mind, as if you were inseparable. I have, as you guess, many philosophical reveries in the shades of Sir Walter Raleigh, of which you are a great part. You generally enter there with me, and like a good Genius, applaud and strengthen all my sentiments that have honour in them. This good office which you have often done me unknowingly, I must acknowledge now, that my own breast may not reproach me with ingratitude, and disquiet me when I would muse again in that solemn scene. I have not room now left to ask you many questions I intended about the Odyssey. I beg I may know how far you have carried Ulysses on his journey, and how you have been entertained with him on the way? I desire I may hear of your health, of Mrs. Pope's, and of every thing else that belongs to you.

How thrive your garden plants? how look the trees? how spring the Brocoli and the Fenchio? hard names to spell! how did the poppies bloom? and how is the great room approv'd? what parties have you had of pleasure? what in the grotto? what upon the Thames? I would know how all your hours pass, all you say, and all you do; of which I should question you yet farther, but my paper is full and spares you. My brother Ned is wholly yours, so my father desires to be, and every soul here whose name is Digby. My sister will be yours in particular. What can I add more? I am, &c.

LETTER XV.

October 10.

I Was upon the point of taking a much greater journey than to Bermudas, even to that *undiscover'd country, from whose bourn No traveller returns!*

A fever carried me on the high gallop towards it for six or seven days — But here you have me now, and that is all I shall say of it: since which time an impertinent lameness kept me at home twice as long; as if fate should say (after the other dangerous illness) „You shall neither go into the other world, nor any „where you like in this.“ Else who knows but I had been at Hom-lacy?

I conspire in your sentiments, emulate your pleasures, wish for your company. You are all of one heart and one soul, as was said of the primitive Christians: 'tis like the kingdom of the just upon earth; not a wicked wretch to interrupt you, but a set of try'd, experienced friends, and fellow-comforters, who have seen evil men and evil days, and have by a superior rectitude of heart set yourselves above them, and reap your reward. Why will you ever, of your own accord, end such a millenary year in London? transmigrate (if I may so call it) into other creatures, in that scene of folly militant, when you may reign for ever at Homlacy in sense and reason triumphant? I appeal to a third Lady in your family, whom I take to be the most innocent, and the least warp'd by idle fashion and custom of you all; I appeal to her, if

you are not every soul of you better people, better companions, and happier, where you are? I desire her opinion under her hand in your next letter, I mean Miss Scudamore's ¹¹. I am confident if she would or durst speak her sense, and employ that reasoning which God has given her, to infuse more thoughtfulness into you all; those arguments could not fail to put you to the blush, and keep you out of town, like people sensible of your own felicities. I am not without hopes, if she can detain a parliament man and a lady of quality from the world one winter, that I may come upon you with such irresistible arguments another year, as may carry you all with me to Bermudas ¹², the seat of all earthly happiness, and the new Jerusalem of the righteous.

Don't talk of the decay of the year, the season is good where the people are so: 'tis the best time of the year for a painter; there is more variety of colours in the leaves, the prospects begin to open, thro' the thinner woods, over the valleys; and thro' the high canopies of trees to the higher arch of heaven: the dews of the morning impearl every thorn, and scatter diamonds on the verdant mantle of the earth; the frosts are fresh and wholesome: what would you have? the Moon shines too, tho' not for Lovers these cold nights, but for Astronomers.

¹¹ Afterwards Duchess of Beaufort, at this time very young. P.

¹² About this time the Rev. Dean Berkley conceived his project of erecting a settlement in Bermudas for the Propagation of the Christian faith, and introduction of Sciences into America. P.

Have ye not reflecting Telescopes ¹³, whereby ye may innocently magnify her spots and blemishes? Content yourselves with them, and do not come to a place where your own eyes become reflecting Telescopes, and where those of all others are equally such upon their neighbours. Stay you at least (for what I've said before relates only to the ladies: don't imagine I'll write about any Eyes but theirs) stay, I say, from that idle, busy-looking Sanhedrin, where wisdom or no wisdom is the eternal debate, not (as it lately was in Ireland) an accidental one.

If, after all, you will despise good advice, and resolve to come to London, here you will find me doing just the things I should not, living where I should not, and as worldly, as idle, in a word as much an Anti-Bermudanist as any body. Dear Sir, make the ladies know I am their servant, you know I am

Yours, &c.

LETTER XVI.

Aug. 12.

I Have been above a month strolling about in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, from garden to garden, but still returning to Lord Cobham's with fresh satisfaction. I should be sorry to see my Lady Scudamore's, till it has had the full advantage of Lord B*'s improvements; and then I will expect something like

¹³ These instruments were just then brought to perfection. P.

the waters of Riskins, and the woods of Oakley together, which (without flattery) would be at least as good as any thing in our world : For as to the hanging gardens of Babylon, the Paradise of Cyrus, and the Sharawaggi's of China, I have little or no ideas of them, but, I dare say, Lord B* has, because they were certainly both very great, and very wild. I hope Mrs. Mary Digby is quite tired of his Lordship's *Extravagante Bergerie* : and that she is just now sitting, or rather reclining on a bank, fatigued with over much dancing and singing at his unwearied request and instigation. I know your love of ease so well, that you might be in danger of being too quiet to enjoy quiet, and too philosophical to be a philosopher; were it not for the ferment Lord B. will put you into. One of his Lordship's maxims is, that a total abstinence from intemperance or business, is no more philosophy, than a total consopition of the senses is repose; one must feel enough of its contrary to have a relish of either. But, after all, let your temper work, and be as sedate and contemplative as you will, I'll engage you shall be fit for any of us, when you come to town in the winter. Folly will laugh you into all the customs of the company here; nothing will be able to prevent your conversion to her, but indisposition, which, I hope, will be far from you. I am telling the worst that can come of you; for as to vice, you are safe; but folly is many an honest man's, nay every good-humour'd man's lot: nay, it is the seasoning of life; and fools (in one sense) are the salt of the earth: a little is excellent, tho' indeed a whole mouthful is justly call'd the Devil.

So much for your diversions next winter, and for mine. I envy you much more at present, than I shall then; for if there be on earth an image of paradise, it is in such perfect Union and Society as you all possess. I would have my innocent envies and wishes of your state known to you all; which is far better than making you compliments, for it is inward approbation and esteem. My Lord Digby has in me a sincere servant, or would have, were there any occasion for me to manifest it.

LETTER XVII.

Decemb. 28, 1724.

IT is now the season to wish you a good end of one year, and a happy beginning of another: but both these you know how to make yourself, by only continuing such a life as you have been long accustomed to lead. As for good works, they are things I dare not name, either to those that do them, or to those that do them not; the first are too modest, and the latter too selfish, to bear the mention of what are become either too old fashion'd, or too private, to constitute any part of the vanity or reputation of the present age. However, it were to be wish'd people would now and then look upon good works as they do upon old wardrobes; merely in case any of them should by chance come into fashion again; as ancient fardingales revive in modern hoop'd petticoats, (which may be properly compared to charities, as they cover a multitude of sins.)

They tell me that at Colehill certain antiquated charities, and obsolete devotions are yet subsisting: that a thing called Christian chearfulness (not incompatible with Christmas-pyes and plum-broth) whereof frequent is the mention in old sermons and almanacks, is really kept alive and in practice: that feeding the hungry, and giving alms to the poor, do yet make a part of good house-keeping, in a latitude not more remote from London than fourscore miles: and lastly, that prayers and roast-beef actually make some people as happy, as a whore and a bottle. But here in town, I assure you, men, women, and children have done with these things. Charity not only begins, but ends, at home. Instead of the four cardinal virtues, now reign four courtly ones: we have cunning for prudence, rapine for justice, timeserving for fortitude, and luxury for temperance. Whatever you may fancy where you live in a state of ignorance, and see nothing but quiet, religion, and good-humour, the case is just as I tell you where people understand the world, and know how to live with credit and glory.

I wish that Heaven would open the eyes of men, and make them sensible which of these is right; whether, upon a due conviction, we are to quit faction, and gaming, and high-feeding, and all manner of luxury, and to take to your country way? or you to leave prayers, and almsgiving, and reading, and exercise, and come into our measures? I wish (I say) that this matter were as clear to all men, as it is to

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

DEAR SIR,

April 21, 1726.

I Have a great inclination to write to you, tho' I cannot by writing any more than I could by words, express what part I bear in your sufferings. Nature and Esteem in you are join'd to aggravate your affliction: the latter I have in a degree equal even to yours, and a tye of friendship approaches near to the tenderness of nature: yet, God knows, no man living is less fit to comfort you, as no man is more deeply sensible than myself of the greatness of the loss. That very virtue, which secures his present state from all the sorrows incident to ours, does but aggrandise our sensation of its being remov'd from our sight, from our affection, and from our imitation; for the friendship and society of good Men does not only make us happier, but it makes us better. Their Death does but complete their felicity before our own, who probably are not yet arrived to that degree of perfection which merits an immediate reward. That your dear brother and my dear friend was so, I take his very removal to be a proof; Providence would certainly lend virtuous men to a world that so much wants them, as long as in its justice to them it could spare them to us. May my soul be with those who have meant well, and have acted well to that meaning! and, I doubt not, if

Mr. Digby died in the year 1726, and is buried in the church of Sherburne in Dorsetshire, with an Epitaph written by the Author. P.

this prayer be granted, I shall be with him. Let us preserve his memory in the way he would best like, by recollecting what his behaviour would have been, in every incident of our lives to come, and doing in each just as we think he would have done; so we shall have him always before our eyes, and in our minds, and (what is more) in our lives and manners. I hope when we shall meet him next, we shall be more of a piece with him, and consequently not to be evermore separated from him. I will add but one word that relates to what remains of yourself and me, since so valued a part of us is gone; it is to beg you to accept, as yours by inheritance, of the vacancy he has left in a heart, which (while he could fill it with such hopes, wishes and affections for him as suited a mortal creature) was truly and warmly his; and shall (I assure you in the sincerity of sorrow for my own loss) be faithfully at your service while I continue to love his memory, that is, while I continue to be myself.



LETTERS

TO AND FROM

DR. ATTERBURY.

Bishop of ROCHESTER.

From 1716 to 1723.

LETTER I.

The Bishop of ROCHESTER
to Mr. POPE.

Decemb. 1716.

I Return your ¹⁴ Preface, which I have read twice with pleasure. The modesty and good sense there is in it, must please every one that reads it: And since there is nothing that can offend, I see not why you should balance a moment about printing it — always provided, that there is nothing said there which you may have occasion to unsay hereafter: of which you yourself are the best and the only judge. This is my sincere opinion, which I give, because you ask it: and which I would not give tho' asked, but to a man

¹⁴ The general preface to Mr. Pope's Poems, first printed 1717. the year after the date of this letter.

I value as much as I do you; being sensible how improper it is, on many accounts, for me to interpose in things of this nature; which I never understood well, and now understand somewhat less than ever I did. But I can deny you nothing; especially since you have had the goodness often, and patiently, to hear what I have said against rhyme, and in behalf of blank verse; with little discretion perhaps, but, I am sure, without the least prejudice: being myself equally incapable of writing well in either of those ways, and leaning therefore to neither side of the question, but as the appearance of reason inclines me. Forgive me this error, if it be one; an error of above thirty years standing, and which therefore I shall be very loth to part with. In other matters which relate to polite writing, I shall seldom differ from you: or, if I do, shall, I hope, have the prudence to conceal my opinion. I am as much as I ought to be, that is, as much as any man can be,

Your, &c.

LETTER II.

The Bishop of ROCHESTER to Mr. POPE.

Feb. 18, 1717.

I Hop'd to find you last night at Lord Bathurst's, and came but a few minutes after you had left him. I brought *Gorboduc*¹⁵ with me; and Dr. Arbuthnot

¹⁵ A Tragedy, written in the Reign of Edward the Sixth (and much the best performance of that Age) by Sackvil, afterwards

telling me he should see you, I deposited the book in his hands: out of which, I think, my Lord Bathurst got it before we parted, and from him therefore you are to claim it. If Gorboduc should still miss his way to you, others are to answer for it; I have delivered up my trust. I am not sorry your ¹⁶ Alcander is burnt; had I known your intentions, I would have interceded for the first page, and put it, with your leave, among my curiosities. In truth, it is the only instance of that kind I ever met with, from a person good for any thing else, nay for every thing else to which he is pleas'd to turn himself.

Depend upon it, I shall see you with great pleasure at Bromley; and there is no request you can make to me, that I shall not most readily comply with. I wish you health and happiness of all sorts, and would be glad to be instrumental in any degree towards helping you to the least share of either. I am always, every where, most affectionately and faithfully

Your, &c.

LETTER III.

The Bishop of ROCHESTER to Mr. POPE.

Bromley, Nov. 8, 1717.

I Have nothing to say to you on that melancholy subject, with an account of which the printed pa-

Earl of Dorset, and Lord Treasurer to Queen Elizabeth. It was then very scarce, but lately reprinted by R. Dodsley in Pall-mall. P.

¹⁶ An Heroic Poem writ at 15 years old. P.

pers have furnish'd me, but what you have already said to yourself,

When you have paid the debt of tenderness you owe to the memory of a Father, I doubt not but you will turn your thoughts towards improving that accident to your own ease and happiness. You have it now in your power, to pursue that method of thinking and living which you like best. Give me leave, If I am not a little too early in my applications of this kind, to congratulate you upon it; and to assure you that there is no man living, who wishes you better, or would be more pleas'd to contribute any ways to your satisfaction or service.

I return you your Milton, which, upon collation, I find to be revised, and augmented, in several places, as the title page of my third edition pretends it to be. When I see you next, I will shew you the several passages alter'd, and added by the author, beside what you mentioned to me.

I protest to you, this last perusal of him has given me such new degrees, I will not say of pleasure but of admiration and astonishment, that I look upon the sublimity of Homer, and the majesty of Virgil with somewhat less reverence than I used to do. I challenge you, with all your partiality, to shew me in the first of these any thing equal to the Allegory of Sin and Death, either as to the greatness and justness of the invention, or the height and beauty of the colouring. What I look'd upon as a rant of Barrow's, I now begin to think a serious truth, and could almost venture to set my hand to it,

*Hæc quicumque legit, tantum cecinisse putabit
Mæoniden Ranas, Virgilium Culices.*

But more of this when we meet. When I left the town the D. of Buckingham continued so ill that he receiv'd no messages; oblige me so far as to let me know how he does; at the same time I shall know how you do, and that will be a double satisfaction to

Your, &c.

LETTER IV.

The Answer.

MY LORD,

Nov. 20, 1717.

I Am truly obliged by your kind condolence on my Father's death, and the desire you express that I should improve this incident to my advantage. I know your Lordship's friendship to me is so extensive, that you include in that wish both my spiritual and my temporal advantage; and it is what I owe to that friendship, to open my mind unreservedly to you on this head. It is true, I have lost a parent for whom no gains I could make would be any equivalent. But that was not my only tye: I thank God another still remains (and long may it remain) of the same tender nature: *Genitrix est mihi* — and excuse me if I say with Euryalus,

nequeam lacrymas perferre parentis.

A rigid divine may call it a carnal tye, but sure it is a virtuous one: at least I am more certain that it

is a duty of nature to preserve a good parent's life and happiness, than I am of any speculative point whatever.

Ignaram hujus quodcunque periculi

Hanc ego, nunc, linquam?

For she, my Lord, would think this separation more grievous than any other, and I, for my part, know as little as poor Euryalus did, of the success of such an adventure, (for an Adventure it is, and no small one, in spite of the most positive divinity.) Whether the change would be to my spiritual advantage, God only knows: this I know, that I mean as well in the religion I now profess, as I can possibly ever do in another. Can a man who thinks so, justify a change, even if he thought both equally good? To such an one, the part of *Joyning* with any one body of Christians might perhaps be easy, but I think it would not be so, to *Renounce* the other.

Your Lordship has formerly advis'd me to read the best controversies between the Churches. Shall I tell you a secret? I did so at fourteen years old, (for I loved reading, and my father had no other books) there was a collection of all that had been written on both sides in the reign of King James the second: I warm'd my head with them, and the consequence was, that I found myself a Papist and a Protestant by turns, according to the last book I read ¹⁷. I am afraid most Seekers are in the same case, and when they stop, they are

¹⁷ This is an admirable description of every Reader labouring in religious controversy, without possessing the *principles* on which a right judgment of the points in question is to be regulated.

not so properly converted, as out-witted. You see how little glory you would gain by my conversion. And after all, I verily believe your Lordship and I are both of the same religion, if we were thoroughly understood by one another, and that all honest and reasonable christians would be so, if they did but talk enough together every day; and had nothing to do together, but to serve God, and live in peace with their neighbour.

As to the *temporal* side of the question, I can have no dispute with you; it is certain, all the beneficial circumstances of life, and all the shining ones, lie on the part you would invite me to. But if I could bring myself to fancy, what I think you do but fancy, that I have any talents for active life, I want health for it; and besides it is a real truth, I have less Inclination (if possible) than Ability. Contemplative life is not only my scene, but it is my habit too. I begun my life where most people end theirs, with a dis-relish of all that the world calls Ambition: I don't know why 'tis called so, for to me it always seem'd to be rather *stooping* than *climbing*. I'll tell you my politic and religious sentiments in a few words. In my politics, I think no further than how to preserve the peace of my life, in any government under which I live; nor in my religion, than to preserve the peace of my conscience, in any church with which I communicate. I hope all churches and all governments are so far of God, as they are rightly understood, and rightly administred: and where they are, or may be wrong, I leave it to God alone to mend or reform them; which whenever he does, it must be by greater instruments than I am. I am not a Papist, for I renounce the temporal invasions of the Papal power, and detest

their arrogated authority over Princes and States. I am a Catholic in the strictest sense of the word. If I was born under an absolute prince, I would be a quiet subject; but I thank God I was not. I have a due sense of the excellence of the British constitution. In a word, the things I have always wished to see are not a Roman Catholic, or a French Catholic, or a Spanish Catholic, but a true Catholic: and not a King of Whigs, or a King of Tories, but a King of England. Which God of his mercy grant his present Majesty may be, and all future Majesties: You see, my Lord, I end like a preacher: this is *Sermo ad Clerum*, not *ad Populum*. Believe me, with infinite obligation and sincere thanks, ever

Your, &c.

LETTER V.

Sept. 23, 1720.

I Hope you have some time ago receiv'd the Sulphur, and the two volumes of Mr. Gay, as instances (how small ones soever) that I wish you both health and diversion. What I now send for your perusal, I shall say nothing of; not to forestall by a single word what you promis'd to say upon that subject. Your Lordship may criticise from Virgil to these Tales; as Solomon wrote of every thing from the cedar to the hyssop. I have some cause, since I last waited on you at Bromley, to look upon you as a prophet in that retreat, from whom oracles are to be had, were mankind wise enough to go

thither to consult you : The fate of the South-sea Scheme has , much sooner than I expected , verify'd what you told me. Most people thought the time would come , but no man prepared for it ; no man considered it would come *like a Thief in the Night*, exactly as it happens in the case of our death. Methinks God has punish'd the avaricious, as he often punishes sinners, in their own way, in the very sin itself: the thirst of gain was their crime, that thirst continued became their punishment and ruin. As for the few who have the good fortune, to remain with half of what they imagined they had (among whom is your humble servant) I would have them sensible of their felicity, and convinced of the truth of old Hesiod's maxim, who, after half his estate was swallowed by the *Directors* of those days, resolv'd, that *half to be more than the whole*.

Does not the fate of these people put you in mind of two passages, one in Job, the other from the Psalmist?

Men shall groan out of the CITY, and hiss them out of their PLACE.

They have dreamed out their dream, and awakening have found nothing in their hands.

Indeed the universal poverty, which is the consequence of universal avarice, and which will fall hardest upon the guiltless and industrious part of mankind, is truly lamentable. The universal deluge of the S. Sea, contrary to the old deluge, has drowned all except a few *Unrighteous* men: but it is some comfort to me that I am not one of them, even tho' I were to survive and rule the world by it. I am much pleas'd with a thought of Dr. Arbuthnot's; he says the government and South-

Sea company have only lock'd up the money of the people, upon conviction of their Lunacy (as is usual in the case of Lunatics) and intend to restore them as much as may be fit for such people, as fast as they shall see them return to their senses.

The latter part of your letter does me so much honour, and shews me so much kindness, that I must both be proud and pleas'd, in a great degree; but I assure you, my Lord, much more the last than the first. For I certainly know, and feel, from my own heart which truly respects you, that there may be a ground for your partiality, one way; but I find not the least symptoms in my head, of any foundation for the other. In a word, the best reason I know for my being pleas'd, is, that you continue your favour toward me; the best I know for being proud, would be that you might cure me of it; for I have found you to be such a physician as does not only *repair*, but *improve*. I am, with the sincerest esteem, and most grateful acknowledgement,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

From the Bishop of ROCHESTER.

THE Arabian Tales, and Mr. Gay's books, I receiv'd not till Monday night, together with your letter; for which I thank you. I have had a fit of the gout upon me ever since I returned hither from Westminster on Saturday night last: it has found its way

into my hands as well as legs, so that I have been utterly incapable of writing. This is the first letter that I have ventured upon; which will be written, I fear, *vacillantibus literis*, as, Tully says, Tyro's letters were, after his Recovery from an illness. What I said to you in mine about the Monument, was intended only to quicken, not to alarm you. It is not worth your while to know what I meant by it: but when I see you, you shall. I hope you may be at the Deanry, towards the end of October, by which time, I think of settling there for the winter. What do you think of some such short inscription as this in latin, which may, in a few words, say all that is to be said of Dryden, and yet nothing more than he deserves?

IOHANNI DRYDENIO,
CVI POESIS ANGLICANA
VIM SVAM AC VENERES DEBET;
ET SIQVA IN POSTERVM AVGEBITVR LAVDE,
EST ADHVC DEBITVRA:
HONORIS ERGO P. &c.

To shew you that I am as much in earnest in the affair, as you yourself, something I will send you too of this kind in English. If your design holds of fixing Dryden's name only below, and his Busto above — may not lines like these be grav'd just under the name?

*This Sheffield rais'd, to Dryden's ashes just,
Here fix'd his Name, and there his lawrel'd Bust.
What else the Muse in Marble might express,
Is known already; Praise would make him less.*

Or thus —
*More needs not ; where acknowledg'd Merits reign,
 Praise is impertinent ; and Censure vain,*

This you'll take as a proof of my zeal at least, tho' it be none of my talent in Poetry. When you have read it over, I'll forgive you if you should not once in your life-time again think of it.

And now, Sir, for your *Arabian Tales*. Ill as I have been, almost ever since they came to hand, I have read as much of them, as ever I shall read while I live. Indeed they do not please my taste : they are writ with so romantick an air, and, allowing for the difference of eastern manners, are yet, upon any supposition that can be made, of so wild and absurd a contrivance (at least to my northern understanding) that I have not only no pleasure, but no patience, in perusing them. They are to me like the odd paintings on Indian screens, which at first glance may surprize and please a little : but, when you fix your eye intently upon them, they appear so extravagant, disproportion'd, and monstrous, that they give a judicious eye, pain, and make him seek for relief from some other object.

They may furnish the mind with some new images : but I think the purchase is made at too great an expence : for to read those two volumes through, liking them as little as I do, would be a terrible penance, and to read them with pleasure would be dangerous on the other side, because of the infection. I will never believe, that you have any keen relish of them, till I find you write worse than you do, which, I dare say, I never shall. Who that *Petit de la Croise* is, the pretended

author of them ¹⁸, I cannot tell: but observing how full they are in the descriptions of dress, furniture, &c. I cannot help thinking them the product of some Woman's imagination: and, believe me, I would do any thing but break with you, rather than be bound to read them over with attention.

I am sorry that I was so true a prophet in respect of the S. Sea, sorry, I mean, as far as your loss is con-

¹⁸ Not the *pretended Author*, but the real translator, from an Arabic MS of the tales, which is in the French King's library. What was translated in ten small Volumes, is not more than the tenth part of the Original. The Eastern people have been always famous for this sort of Composition: in which much fine morality is frequently conveyed; not indeed in a story always representing real life, but what the eastern superstitions made pass for such amongst the people. Their great genius for this kind of writing appears from these very tales. But the policy of some of the later princes of the East greatly hurt the task, by setting all men upon composing them, to furnish matter for their coffee-houses and places of resort; which were enjoined to give this entertainment to the people, with design to divert them from politics, and matters of state. This Collection is so strange a medley of sense and nonsense, that one would be tempted to think it was the work of some Coffee-man, who gathered indifferently from good and bad. The contrivance he has invented of tying them together has led him into such a blunder, that after that, one could not be surprized at any thing. The tales are supposed to be told to one of the Kings of Persia of the Dynasty of the Sassanides, an ancient race before Mahomer, and yet the scene of some of them is laid in the Court of *Haroun Alraschid* the 26th Chalif, and the 5th of the Race of the *Abbassides*. These are amongst the best, and, indeed, it is no wonder. He was one of the most magnificent of the Chalifs, and the greatest encourager of Letters; so that it was natural for men of genius in after times, to do this honour to his memory. But the Bishop talks of *Petit de la Croise*. M. Galland was the translator of the *Arabian tales*. The name of the other is to the collection, called the *Persian tales*, of which I have nothing to say.

cern'd : for in the general I ever was and still am of opinion, that had that project taken root and flourish'd, it would by degrees have overturn'd our constitution. Three or four hundred millions was such a weight, that whichsoever way it had leaned, must have born down all before it — But of the dead we must speak gently; and therefore, as Mr. Dryden says somewhere, *Peace be to its Manes!*

Let me add one reflection, to make you easy in your ill luck. Had you got all that you have lost beyond what you ventur'd, consider that your superfluous gains would have sprung from the ruin of several families that now want necessaries ! a thought, under which a good and good-natured man that grew rich by such means, could not, I persuade myself, be perfectly easy. Adieu, and believe me, ever

Your, &c.

LETTER VII.

From the Bishop of ROCHESTER.

March 26, 1721.

YOU are not yourself gladder you are well, than I am; especially since I can please myself with the thought that when you had lost your health elsewhere, you recovered it here. May these lodgings never treat you worse, nor you at any time have less reason to be fond of them!

I thank you for the sight of your ¹⁹ Verses, and with the freedom of an honest, tho' perhaps injudicious friend, must tell you, that tho' I could like some of them, if they were any body's else but yours, yet as they are yours and to be own'd as such, I can scarce like any of them. Not but that the four first lines are good, especially the second couplet; and might, if followed by four others as good, give reputation to a writer of a less established fame: but from you I expect something of a more perfect kind, and which the oftener it is read, the more it will be admired. When you barely exceed other writers, you fall much beneath yourself: 'tis your misfortune now to write without a rival, and to be tempted by that means to be more careless, than you would otherwise be in your composures.

Thus much I could not forbear saying, tho' I have a motion of consequence in the House of Lords to day, and must prepare for it. I am even with you for your ill paper; for I write upon worse, having no other at hand. I wish you the continuance of your health most heartily; and am ever

Yours, &c.

I have sent Dr. Arbuthnot ²⁰ the Latin MS. which I could not find when you left me; and I am so angry at

¹⁹ Epitaph on Mr. Harcourt.

P.

²⁰ Written by Huetius, bishop of Avranches. He was a mean reasoner; as may be seen by a vast collection of fanciful and extravagant conjectures, which he called a *Demonstration*; mixed up with much reading, which his friends called learning, and delivered (by the allowance of all) in good latin. This not being received for what he would give it, he composed a treatise of the *weakness of the human understanding*: a poor system of scepticism; indeed little other than an abstract from *Sextus Empiricus*.

the writer for his design, and his manner of executing it, that I could hardly forbear sending him a line of Virgil along with it. The chief Reasoner of that philosophic farce is a *Gallo-Ligur*, as he is call'd — what that means in English or French, I can't say — but all he says, is in so loose and slippery and trickish a way of reasoning, that I could not forbear applying the passage of Virgil to him,

Vane Ligur, frustraue animis elate superbis!

Nequicquam patrias tentasti lubricus artes —

To be serious, I hate to see a book gravely written, and in all the forms of argumentation, which proves nothing, and which says nothing; and endeavours only to put us into a way of distrusting our own faculties, and doubting whether the marks of truth and falsehood can in any case be distinguished from each other. Could that blessed point be made out (as it is a contradiction in terms to say it can) we should then be in the most uncomfortable and wretched state in the world; and I would in that case be glad to exchange my Reason, with a dog for his Instinct, to-morrow.

LETTER VIII.

L. Chancellor HARCOURT to Mr. POPE.

Decemb. 6, 1722.

I Cannot but suspect myself of being very unreasonable in begging you once more to review the inclos'd. Your friendship draws this trouble on you. I may

freely own to you, that my tenderness makes me exceeding hard to be satisfied with any thing which can be said on such an unhappy subject.. I caus'd the Latin Epitaph be as often alter'd before I could approve it.

When once your Epitaph is set up, there can be no alteration of it, it will remain a perpetual monument of your friendship, and, I assure myself, you will so settle it, that it shall be worthy of you. I doubt whether the word, *deny'd*, in the third line, will justly admit of that construction which it ought to bear (*viz.*) renounced, deserted, &c. *deny'd* is capable, in my opinion, of having an ill sense put upon it, as too great uneasiness, or more good-nature, than a wise man ought to have. I very well remember you told me, you could scarce mend those two lines, and therefore I can scarce expect your forgiveness for my desiring you to reconsider them.

Harcourt stands dumb, and Pope is forc'd to speak.

I can't perfectly, at least without further discouraging you, reconcile myself to the first part of that line; and, the word *forc'd* (which was my own, and, I persuade myself, for that reason only submitted to by you) seems to carry too doubtful a construction for an Epitaph, which, as I apprehend, ought, as easily to be understood as read. I shall acknowledge it as a very particular favour, if at your best leisure you will peruse the inclosed and vary it, if you think it capable of being amended, and let me see you any morning next week.

I am, &c.

 L E T T E R IX.

The Bishop of ROCHESTER to MR. POPE.

Sept. 27, 1721.

I Am now confined to my bed-chamber, and to the matted room, wherein I am writing, seldom venturing to be carried down even into the parlour to dinner unless when company to whom I cannot excuse myself, comes, which I am not ill pleas'd to find is now very seldom. This is my case in the sunny part of the year: what must I expect, when

inversum contristat Aquarius annum?

„If these things be done in the green tree, what shall
„be done in the dry.“ Excuse me for employing a sentence of Scripture on this occasion; I apply it very seriously. One thing relieves me a little under the ill prospect I have of spending my time at the Deanry this winter; that I shall have the opportunity of seeing you oftener; tho', I am afraid, you will have little pleasure in seeing me there. So much for my ill state of health, which I had not touch'd on, had not your friendly letter been so full of it. One civil thing, that you say in it, made me think you had been reading Mr. Waller; and possess'd of that image at the end of his copy, *à la malade*, had you not bestow'd it on one who has no right to the least part of the character. If you have not read the verses lately, I am sure you remember them because you forget nothing.

*With such a grace you entertain,
And look with such contempt on pain, &c.*

I mention them not on the account of that coupler, but one that follows; which ends with the very same rhymes and words (*appear* and *clear*) that the couplet but one after that does — and therefore in my Waller there is a various reading of the first of these couplets; for there it runs thus,

*So lightnings in a stormy air
Scorch more, than when the sky is fair.*

You will say that I am not very much in pain, nor very busy, when I can relish these amusements, and you will say true: for at present I am in both these respects very easy.

I had not strength enough to attend Mr. Prior to his grave, else I would have done it, to have shew'd his friends that I had forgot and forgiven what he wrote on me. He is buried, as he desired, at the feet of Spencer, and I will take care to make good in every respect what I said to him when living; particularly as to the Triplet he wrote for his own Epitaph; which while we were in good terms, I promis'd him should never appear on his tomb while I was Dean of Westminster.

I am pleas'd to find you have so much pleasure, and (which is the foundation of it), so much health at Lord Bathurst's: may both continue till I see you! may my Lord have as much satisfaction in building the house in the wood, and using it when built, as you have in designing it! I cannot send a

wish after him that means him more happiness, and yet, I am sure, I wish him as much as he wishes himself.

I am, &c.

LETTER X.

From the same.

Bromley, Oct. 15, 1721.

Notwithstanding I write this on Sunday even, to acknowledge the receipt of yours this morning: yet, I foresee, it will not reach you till Wednesday morning. And before set of sun that day I hope to reach my winter quarters at the Deanry. I hope, did I say? I recall that word, for it implies desire: and, God knows, that is far from being the case. For I never part with this place but with regret, tho' I generally keep here what Mr. Cowley calls the worst of company in the world, my own; and see either none beside, or what is worse than none, some of the *Arrii*, or *Sebosi* of my neighbourhood: Characters, which Tully paints so well in one of his Epistles, and complains of the too civil, but impertinent interruption they gave him in his retirement. Since I have named those gentlemen, and the book is not far from me, I will turn to the place, and by pointing it out to you, give you the pleasure of perusing the epistle, which is a very agreeable one, if my memory does not fail me.

I am surpriz'd to find that my Lord Bathurst and you are parted so soon; he has been sick, I know, of

some late transactions; but should that sickness continue still in some measure, I prophesy, it will be quite off by the beginning of November: a letter or two from his London-friends, and a surfeit of solitude will soon make him change his resolution and his quarters. I vow to you, I could live here with pleasure all the winter, and be contented with hearing no more news than the London Journal, or some such trifling paper, affords me, did not the duty of my place require, absolutely require my attendance at Westminster; where, I hope, the Prophet will now and then remember he has a bed and a candlestick. In short, I long to see you, and hope you will come, if not a day, yet at least an hour sooner to town than you intended, in order to afford me that satisfaction. I am now, I thank God! as well as ever I was in my life, except that I can walk scarce at all without crutches: And I would willingly compound the matter with the gout, to be no better, could I hope to be no worse; but that is a vain thought, I expect a new attack long before Christmas. Let mee see you therefore while I am in a condition to relish you, before the days (and the nights) come, when I shall (and must) say, I have no pleasure in them.

I will bring your small volume of Pastorals along with me, that you may not be discouraged from lending me books, when you find me so punctual in returning them. Shakespear shall bear it company, and be put into your hands as clear and as fair as it came out of them, tho' you, I think, have been dabbling here and there with the text: I have had more reverence for the writer and the printer, and left every

thing standing just as I found it. However, I thank you for the pleasure you have given me in putting me upon reading him once more before I die.

I believe I shall scarce repeat that pleasure any more, having other work to do, and other things to think of, but none that will interfere with the offices of friendship, in the exchange of which with you, Sir, I hope to live and die.

Your, &c.

P. S. Addison's works came to my hands yesterday. I cannot but think it a very odd set of incidents, that the book should be dedicated by a ²¹ dead man to ²² a dead man; an even that the new ²³ patron to whom Tickel chose to inscribe his verses, should be dead also before they were published. Had I been in the Editor's place I should have been a little apprehensive for myself, under a thought that every one who had any hand in that work was to die before the publication of it. You see, when I am conversing with you, I know not how to give over, till the very bottom of the paper admonishes me once more to bid you adieu!

L E T T E R X I.

M Y L O R D,

Feb. 8, 1721-2.

IT is so long since I had the pleasure of an hour with your Lordship, that I should begin to think myself no longer *Amicus omnium horarum*, but for finding

²¹ Mr. Addison.

²² Mr. Craggs.

²³ Lord Warwick.

myself so in my constant thoughts of you. In those I was with you many hours this very day, and had you (where I wish and hope one day to see you really) in my garden at Twitnam. When I went last to town, and was on wing for the Deanry, I heard your Lordship was gone the day before to Bromley, and there you continued till after my return hither. I sincerely wish you whatever you wish yourself, and all you wish your friends or family. All I mean by this word or two, is just) to tell you so, till in person I find you as I desire, that is, find you well: easy, resign'd, and happy you will make yourself, and (I believe) every body that converses with you; if I may judge of your power over other mens minds and affections, by that which you will ever have over those of

Your, &c.

LETTER XII.

From the Bishop of ROCHESTER.

Feb. 26, 1721-2.

PERmit me, dear Sir, to break into your retirement, and to desire of you a complete copy of those verses on Mr. Addison²⁴; send me also your last resolution, which shall punctually be observed in relation to my giving out any copy of it; for I am again solicited by another Lord, to whom I have given the same answer as formerly. No small piece of your wri-

²⁴ An imperfect Copy was got out, very much to the Author's surprize, who never would give any. P.

ring has been ever fought after so much: it has pleas'd every man without exception, to whom it has been read. Since you now therefore know where your real strength lies, I hope you will not suffer that talent to lye unemploy'd. For my part, I should be so glad to see you finish something of that kind, that I could be content to be a little sneer'd at in a line or so, for the sake of the pleasure I should have in reading the rest. I have talk'd my sense of this matter to you once or twice, and now I put it under my hand, that you may see it is my deliberate opinion. What weight that may have with you I cannot say: but it pleases me to have an opportunity of shewing you how well I wish you, and how true a friend I am to your fame, which I desire may grow every day, and in every kind of writing, to which you shall please to turn your pen. Not but that I have some little interest in the proposal, as I shall be known to have been acquainted with a man that was capable of excelling in such different manners, and did such honour to his country and language; and yet was not displeas'd sometimes to read what was written by his humble servant.

LETTER XIII.

March 14, 1721-2.

I Was disappointed (much more than those who commonly use that phrase on such occasions) in missing you at the Deanry, where I lay solitary two nights. Indeed I truly partake in any degree of con-

cern that affects you, and I wish every thing may succeed as you desire in your own family, and in that which, I think, you no less account your own, and is no less your family, the whole world: for I take you to be one of the true friends of it, and to your power its protector. Tho' the noise and daily bustle for the public be now over, I dare say, a good man is still tending its welfare; as the Sun in the winter, when seeming to retire from the world, is preparing benedictions and warmth for a better season. No man wishes your Lordship more quiet, more tranquillity, than I, who know you should understand the value of it: but I don't wish you a jot less concern'd or less active than you are, in all sincere, and therefore warm, desires of public good. I beg the kindness (and 'tis for that chiefly I trouble you with this letter) to favour me with notice as soon as you return to London, that I may come and make you a proper visit of a day or two: for hitherto I have not been your Visitor, but your Lodger, and I accuse myself of it. I have now no earthly thing to oblige my being in town (a point of no small satisfaction to me) but the best reason, the seeing a friend. As long, my Lord, as you will let me call you so (and I dare say you will, till I forfeit what, I think, I never shall, my veracity and integrity) I shall esteem myself fortunate, in spite of the South-sea, Poetry, Popery, and Poverty.

I can't tell you how sorry I am, you should be troubled a new by any sort of people. I heartily wish, *Quod superest, ut tibi vivas* — that you may teach me how to do the same: who, without any real

impediment to acting and living rightly, do act and live as foolishly as if I were a Great man.

I am, &c.

LETTER XIV.

From the Bishop of ROCHESTER.

March 16, 1721-2.

AS a visitant, a lodger, a friend (or under what other denomination soever) you are always welcome to me; and will be more so, I hope, every day that we live: for, to tell you the truth, I like you as I like myself, best when we have both of us least business. It has been my fate to be engaged in it much and often, by the stations in which I was placed: but God, that knows my heart, knows, I never lov'd it; and am still less in love with it than ever, as I find less temptation to act with any hope of success. If I am good for any thing, 'tis *in angulo cum likello*; and yet a good part of my time has been spent, and perhaps must be spent, far otherwise. For I will never, while I have health, be wanting to my duty in my post, or in any respect, how little soever I may like my employment, and how hopeless soever I may be in the discharge of it.

In the mean time the judicious world is pleas'd to think that I delight in work which I am oblig'd to undergo, and aim at things which I from my heart despise; let them think as they will, so I might be at liberty to act as I will, and spend my time in such a

manner as is most agreeable to me. I cannot say I do so now, for I am here without any books, and if I had them could not use them to my satisfaction, while my mind is taken up to a more melancholy²⁵ manner; and how long, or how little a while it may be so taken up God only knows, and to his will I implicitly resign myself in every thing.

I am, &c.

LETTER XV.

MY LORD,

March 19, 1721-2.

I Am extremely sensible of the repeated favour of your kind letters, and your thoughts of me in absence, even among thoughts of much nearer concern to yourself on the one hand, and of much more importance to the world on the other, which cannot but engage you at this juncture. I am very certain of your good will, and of the warmth which is in you inseparable from it.

Your remembrance of Twitenham is a fresh instance of that partiality. I hope the advance of the fine season will set you upon your legs, enough to enable you to get into my garden, where I will carry you up a Mount, in a point of view to shew you the glory of my little kingdom. If you approve it, I shall be in danger to boast, like Nebuchadnezzar, of the things I have made, and to be turn'd to converse, not with the beasts of the field, but with the birds of the gro-

²⁵ In his Lady's last Sickness.

ve, which I shall take to be no great punishment. For indeed I heartily despise the ways of the world, and most of the great ones of it.

Oh keep me innocent, make others great!

And you may judge how comfortably I am strengthen'd in this opinion, when such as your Lordship bear testimony to its vanity and emptiness. *Tinnit, inane est*, with the picture of one ringing on the globe with his finger, is the best thing I have the luck to remember in that great Poet Quarles (not that I forget the Devil at bowls; which I know to be your Lordship's favourite cut, as well as favourite diversion.)

The situation here is pleasant, and the view rural enough, to humour the most retired, and agree with the most contemplative. Good air, solitary groves, and sparing diet, sufficient to make you fancy yourself (what you are in temperance, tho' elevated into a greater figure by your station) one of the Fathers of the Desert. Here you may think (to use an author's words, whom you so justly prefer to all his followers that you'll receive them kindly, tho' taken from his worst work ²⁶).

That in Eliah's banquet you partake,

Or sit a guest with Daniel, at his Pulse.

I am sincerely free with you, as you desire I should, and approve of your not having your coach here, for if you would see Lord C* or any body else, I have another chariot, besides that little one you laugh'd at

²⁵ The *Paradise Regain'd*. I suppose this was in compliment to the Bishop. It could never be his own opinion.

when you compar'd me to Homer in a nut-shell. But if you would be entirely private, no body shall know any thing of the matter. Believe me (my Lord) no man is with more perfect acquiescence, nay with more willing acquiescence (not even any of your own Sons of the Church)

Your obedient, &c.

LETTER XVI.

From the Bishop of ROCHESTER.

April 6, 1722.

UNDER all the leisure in the world, I have no leisure, no stomach to write to you: The gradual approaches of death are before my eyes; I am convinced that it must be so: and yet make a shift to flatter myself sometimes with the thought, that it may possibly be otherwise. And that very thought, tho' it is directly contrary to my reason, does for a few moments make me easy — however not easy enough in good earnest to think of any thing but the melancholy object that employs them. Therefore wonder not that I do not answer your kind letter: I shall answer it too soon, I fear, by accepting your friendly invitation. When I do so, no conveniencies will be wanting: for I'll see no body but you and your mother, and the servants. Visits to statesmen always were to me (and are now more than ever) insipid things: let the men that expect, that wish to thrive by them, pay them that homage; I am free. When I want them,

they shall hear of me at their doors: and when they want me, I shall be sure to hear of them at mine. But probably they will despise me so much, and I shall court them so little, that we shall both of us keep our distance.

When I come to you, 'tis in order to be with you only; a president of the council, or a star and garter will make no more impression upon my mind, at such a time, than the hearing of a bag-pipe, or the sight of a puppet-shew. I have said to Greatness sometime ago — *Tuas tibi res habeto, Egomet curabo meas.* The time is not far off when we shall all be upon the level: and I am resolv'd, for my part, to anticipate that time, and be upon the level with them now: for he is so, that neither seeks nor wants them. Let them have more virtue and less pride: and then I'll court them as much as any body: but till they resolve to distinguish themselves some way else than by their outward trappings, I am determin'd (and, I think, I have a right) to be as proud as they are: tho' I trust in God, my pride is neither of so odious a nature as theirs, nor of so mischievous a consequence.

I know not how I have fallen into this train of thinking — when I sat down to write I intended only to excuse myself for not writing, and to tell you that the time drew nearer and nearer, when I must dislodge; I am preparing for it: For I am at this moment building a vault in the Abby for me and mine. 'Twas to be in the Abby, because of my relation to the place; but 'tis at the west door of it: as far from Kings and Cæsars as the space would admit of.

I know not but I may step to town tomorrow, to see how the work goes forward; but, if I do, I shall return hither in the evening. I would not have given you the trouble of this letter but that they tell me it will cost you nothing, and that our privilege of Franking (one of the most valuable we have left) is again allow'd us.

Your, &c.

LETTER XVII.

From the Bishop of ROCHESTER.

Bromley, May 25, 1722.

I Had much ado to get hither last night, the water being so rough that the ferry-men were unwilling to venture. The first thing I saw this morning after my eyes were open, was your letter; for the freedom and kindness of which I thank you. Let all compliments be laid aside between us for the future; and depend upon me as your faithful friend in all things within my power, as one that truly values you, and wishes you all manner of happiness. I thank you and Mrs. Pope for my kind reception which has left a pleasing impression upon me that will not soon be effaced.

Lord * has press'd me terribly to see him at * and told me in a manner betwixt kindness and resentment, that it is but a few miles beyond Twickenham.

I have but a little time left, and a great deal to do in it; and must expect that ill health will render a

good share of it useless; and therefore what is likely to be left at the foot of the account, ought by me to be cherish'd, and not thrown away in compliments. You know the Motto of my sun-dial, *Vivite, dit, fugio*. I will, as far as I am able, follow its advice, and cut off all unnecessary avocations and amusements. There are those that intend to employ me this winter in a way I do not like: If they persist in their intentions, I must apply myself to the work they cut out for me, as well as I can. But withal, that shall not hinder me from employing myself also in a way which they do not like. The givers of trouble one way shall have their share of it another; that at last they may be induced to let me be quiet, and live to myself, with the few (the very few) friends I like; for that is the point, the single point, I now aim at; tho', I know, the generality of the world who are unacquainted with my intentions and views, think the very reverse of this character belongs to me. I don't know how I have rambled into this account of myself; when I sat down to write, I had no thought of making that any part of my letter.

You might have been sure without my telling you, that my right hand is at ease; else I should not have overflow'd at this rate. And yet I have not done, for there is a kind intimation in the end of yours, which I understood, because it seems to tend towards employing me in something that is agreeable to you. Pray explain yourself, and believe that you have not an acquaintance in the world that would be more in earnest on such an occasion than I, for I love you, as well as esteem you.

All the while I have been writing, Pain, and a fine Thrush have been severally endeavouring to call off my attention; but both in vain, nor should I yet part with you, but that the turning over a new leaf frights me a little, and makes me resolve to break thro' a new temptation, before it has taken too fast hold on me.

I am, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

From the same.

June 15, 1722.

YOU have generally written first, after our parting; I will now be before-hand with you in my enquiries, how you got home and how you do, and whether you met with Lord *, and deliver'd my civil reproach to him, in the manner I desir'd? I suppose you did not, because I have heard nothing either from you, or from him on that head; as, I suppose, I might have done, if you had found him.

I am sick of these Men of quality; and the more so, the oft'ner I have any business to transact with them. They look upon it as one of their distinguishing privileges, not to be punctual in any business, of how great importance soever; nor to set other people at ease, with the loss of the least part of their own. This conduct of his vexes me; but to what purpose? or how can I alter it?

I long to see the original MS. of Milton : but don't know how to come at it, without your repeated assistance.

I hope you won't utterly forget what pass'd in the coach about Samson Agonistes. I shall not press you as to time, but some time or other, I wish you would review, and polish that piece. If upon a new perusal of it (which I desire you to make) you think as I do, that it is written in the very spirit of the Ancients; it deserves your care, and is capable of being improved, with little trouble, into a perfect model and standard of Tragic poetry — always allowing for its being a story taken out of the Bible; which is an objection that at this time of day, I know, is not to be got over.

I am, &c.

LETTER XIX.

July 27.

I Have been as constantly at Twickenham as your Lordship has at Bromley, ever since you saw Lord Bathurst. At the time of the Duke of Marlborough's funeral, I intend to lie at the Deanry, and moralize one evening with you on the vanity of human Glory. —

The Duchess's ²⁶ letter concerns me nearly, and you know it, who know all my thoughts without disguise: I must keep clear of Flattery; I will: and as this is

²⁶ The Duchess of Buckingham.

an honest resolution, I dare hope, your Lordship will not be so unconcern'd for my keeping it, as not to assist me in so doing. I beg therefore you would represent thus much at least to her Grace, that as to the fear she seems touch'd with, (That the Duke's memory should have no advantage but what he must give himself, without being beholden to any one friend) your Lordship may certainly, and agreeably to your character, both of rigid honour and Christian plainness, tell her, that no man can have any other advantage: and that all offerings of friends in such a case pass for nothing. Be but so good as to confirm what I've represented to her, that an inscription in the antient way, plain, pompous, yet modest, will be the most uncommon, and therefore the most distinguishing manner of doing it. And so, I hope, she will be satisfied, the Duke's honour be preserv'd, and my integrity also: which is too sacred a thing to be forfeited, in consideration of any little (or what people of quality may call great) Honour or distinction whatever, which those of their rank can bestow on one of mine; and which indeed they are apt to overrate, but never so much, as when they imagine us under any obligation to say one untrue word in their favour.

I can only thank you, my Lord, for the kind transition you make from common business, to that which is the only real business of every reasonable creature. Indeed I think more of it than you imagine, tho' not so much as I ought. I am pleas'd with those Latin verses extremely, which are so very good that I thought them yours, 'till you call'd them an Horatian Cento,

and then I recollected the *disjecti membra poetæ*. I won't pretend I am so totally in those sentiments which you compliment me with, as I yet hope to be: You tell me I have them, as the civillest method to put me in mind how much it fits me to have them. I ought, first, to prepare my mind by a better knowledge even of good prophane writers, especially the Moralists, &c. before I can be worthy of tasting that supreme of books, and sublime of all writings. In which, as in all the intermediate ones, you may (if your friendship and charity toward me continue so far) be the best guide to

Your, &c.

LETTER XX.

From the Bishop of Rochester,

July 30, 1722.

I Have written to the Duchess²⁷ just as you desir'd, and referred her to our meeting in town for a further account of it. I have done it the rather because your opinion in the case is sincerely mine: and if it had not been so, you yourself should not have induced me to give it. Whether, and how far she will acquiesce in it, I cannot say: especially in a case where she thinks the Duke's honour concern'd; but should she seem to persist a little at present, her good sense (which I depend upon) will afterwards satisfy her that we are in the right.

²⁷ Duchess of Buckingham.

I go to-morrow to the Deanry, and, I believe, I shall stay there, till I have said Dust to dust, and shut up that ²⁸ last scene of pompous vanity.

'Tis a great while for me to stay there at this time of the year; and I know I shall often say to myself, while I am expecting the funeral,

*O Rus, quando ego te aspiciam! quandoque licebit
Ducere sollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ!*

In that case I shall fancy I hear the ghost of the dead, thus intreating me,

At tu sacratæ ne parce malignis arenæ

Offibus & capiti inhumato

Particulam dare —

Quaquam festinas, non est mora longa; licebit,

Injecto ter pulvere, curras.

There is an answer for me somewhere in *Hamlet* to this request, which you remember, tho' I don't. Poor Ghost! thou shalt be satisfied! — or something like it. However that be, take care you do not fail in your appointment, that the company of the living may make me some amends for my attendance on the dead.

I know you will be glad to hear that I am well: I should always, could I always be here —

See me

Imperiosa trahit Proserpina: vive, valeque.

²⁸ This was the Funeral of the Duke of Marlborough, at which the Bishop officiated as Dean of Westminster, in Aug. 1722.

You are the first man I sent to this morning, and the last man I desire to converse with this evening, tho' at twenty miles distance from you.

Te, veniente die, Te, decedente, requiro.

LETTER XXI.

From the Bishop of ROCHESTER.

DEAR SIR, The Tower, April 10, 1723.

I Thank you for all the instances of your friendship, both before, and since my misfortunes. A little time will complete them, and separate you and me for ever. But in what part of the world soever I am, I will live mindful of your sincere kindness to me; and will please myself with the thought, that I still live in your esteem and affection, as much as ever I did; and that no accidents of life, no distance of time, or place, will alter you in that respect. It never can me; who have lov'd and valued you, ever since I knew you, and shall not fail to do it when I am not allowed to tell you so; as the case will soon be. Give my faithful services to Dr. Arbuthnot, and thanks for what he sent me, which was much to the purpose, if any thing can be said to be to the purpose, in a case that is already determined. Let him know my Defence will be such, that neither my friends need blush for me, nor will my enemies have great occasion of Triumph, tho' sure of the Victory. I shall want his advice before I go abroad, in many things. But I

question whether I shall be permitted to see him, or any body, but such as are absolutely necessary towards the dispatch of my private affairs. If so, God bless you both! and may no part of the ill fortune that attends me, ever pursue either of you! I know not but I may call upon you at my hearing, to say somewhat about my way of spending my time at the Deanry, which did not seem calculated towards managing plots and conspiracies. But of that I shall consider — You and I have spent many hours together upon much pleasanter subjects; and, that I may preserve the old custom, I shall not part with you now till I have clos'd this letter, with three lines of Milton, which you will, I know, readily and not without some degree of concern apply to your ever affectionate, &c.

Some nat'ral Tears he dropt, but wip'd them soon:

The world was all before him, where to chuse

His place of rest, and Providence his Guide.

LETTER XXII.

The Answer.

April 20, 1723.

IT is not possible to express what I think, and what I feel; only this that I have thought and felt for nothing but you, for some time past: and shall think of nothing so long for the time to come. The greatest comfort I had was an intention (which I would have made practicable) to have attended you in your journey, to which I had brought that person to con-

sent, who only could have hindered me, by a tie which, tho' it may be more tender, I do not think more strong, than that of friendship. But I fear there will be no way left me to tell you this great truth, that I remember you, that I love you, that I am grateful to you, that I entirely esteem and value you: no way but that one, which needs no open warrant to authorize it, or secret conveyance to secure it; which no bills can preclude, and no Kings prevent; a way that can reach to any part of the world where you may be, where the very whisper or even the wish of a friend must not be heard, or even suspected: by this way, I dare tell my esteem and affection of you, to your enemies in the gates, and you, and they, and their sons, may hear of it.

You prove yourself, my Lord, to know me for the friend I am; in judging that the manner of your Defence, and your Reputation by it, is a point of the highest concern to me: and assuring me, it shall be such, that none of your friends shall blush for you. Let me further prompt you to do yourself the best and most lasting justice: the instruments of your Fame to posterity will be in your own hands. May it not be, that providence has appointed you to some great and useful work, and calls you to it this severe way? You may more eminently and more effectually serve the Public even now, than in the stations you have so honourably fill'd. Think of Tully, Bacon, and Clarendon; ²⁹ is it not the latter, the disgraced part of their

²⁹ Clarendon indeed wrote his best works in his banishment: but the best of Bacon's were written before his disgrace, and the best of Tully's after his return from exile.

lives, which you most envy, and which you would choose to have liv'd?

I am tenderly sensible of the wish you express, that no part of your misfortune may pursue me. But, God knows, I am every day less and less fond of my native country (so torn as it is by Party-rage) and begin to consider a friend in exile as a friend in death; one gone before, where I am not unwilling nor unprepared to follow after; and where (however various or uncertain the roads and voyages of another world may be) I cannot but entertain a pleasing hope that we may meet again.

I faithfully assure you, that in the mean time there is no one, living or dead, of whom I shall think oftener or better than of you. I shall look upon you as in a state between both, in which you will have from me all the passions and warm wishes that can attend the living, and all the respect and tender sense of loss, that we feel for the dead. And I shall ever depend upon your constant friendship, kind memory, and good offices, tho' I were never to see or hear the effects of them: like the trust we have in benevolent spirits, who, tho' we never see or hear them, we think, are constantly serving us, and praying for us.

Whenever I am wishing to write to you, I shall conclude you are intentionally doing so to me. And every time that I think of you, I will believe you are thinking of me. I never shall suffer to be forgotten (nay to be but faintly remember'd) the honour, the pleasure, the pride I must ever have, in reflecting how frequently you have delighted me, how kindly you have distinguish'd me, how cordially you have ad-

vis'd me! In conversation, in study, I shall always want you, and wish for you: In my most lively, and in my most thoughtful hours, I shall equally bear about me, the impressions of you: And perhaps it will not be in This life only, that I shall have cause to remember and acknowledge the friendship of the Bishop of Rochester.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X X I I I .

To the same.

May 1723.

ONCE more I write to you, as I promis'd, and this once, I fear, will be the last! the Curtain will soon be drawn between my friend and me, and nothing left but to wish you a long good - night. May you enjoy a state of repose in this life, not unlike that sleep of the soul which some have believ'd is to succeed it, where we lye utterly forgetful of that world from which we are gone, and ripening for that to which we are to go. If you retain any memory of the past, let it only image to you what has pleas'd you best; sometimes present a dream of an absent friend, or bring you back an agreeable conversation. But upon the whole, I hope you will think less of the time past than of the future; as the former has been less kind to you than the latter infallibly will be. Do not envy the world your Studies; they will tend to the benefit of men against whom you can have no complaint, I

mean of all Posterity; and perhaps, at your time of life, nothing else is worth your care. What is every year of a wise man's life but a censure or critic on the past? Those whose date is the shortest, live long enough to laugh at one half of it: the boy despises the infant, the man the boy, the philosopher both, and the Christian all. You may now begin to think your manhood was too much a puerility; and you'll never suffer your age to be but a second infancy. The toys and baubles of your childhood are hardly now more below you, than those toys of our riper and of our declining years, the drums and rattles of Ambition, and the dirt and bubbles of Avarice. At this time, when you are cut off from a little society and made a citizen of the world at large, you should bend your talents not to serve a Party, or a few, but all mankind. Your Genius should mount above that mist in which its participation and neighbourhood with earth long involv'd it; to shine abroad and to heaven, ought to be the business and the glory of your present situation. Remember it was at such a time, that the greatest lights of antiquity dazled and blazed the most, in their retreat, in their exile, or in their death: but why do I talk of dazling or blazing? it was then that they did good, that they gave light, and that they became Guides to mankind.

Those aims alone are worthy of spirits truly great, and such I therefore hope will be yours. Resentment indeed may remain, perhaps cannot be quite extinguished, in the noblest minds; but Revenge never will harbour there: higher principles than those of the first, and better principles than those of the latter, will in-

fallibly influence men, whose thoughts and whose hearts are enlarged, and cause them to prefer the Whole to any part of mankind, especially to so small a part as one's single self.

Believe me, my Lord, I look upon you as a spirit entered into another life ³⁰, as one just upon the edge of Immortality; where the passions and affections must be much more exalted, and where you ought to despise all little views, and all mean retrospects ³¹. Nothing is worth your looking back; and therefore look forward, and make (as you can) the world look after you. But take care that it be not with pity, but with esteem and admiration.

I am with the greatest sincerity, and passion for your fame as well as happiness,

Your, &c.

30 The Bishop of Rochester went into exile the month following, and continued in it till his death, which happen'd at Paris on the fifteenth day of February in the year 1732. P.

31 Notwithstanding this, Mr. Pope was convinced, before the Bishop's death, that during his banishment he was in the intrigues of the Pretender. Tho', when he took his last leave of Mr. Pope, he told him, he would allow him to say his sentence was just, if he ever found he had any concerns with that family in his exile, good



LETTER XXIV.

From the Bishop of ROCHESTER.

Paris, Nov. 23, 1731.

YOU will wonder to see me in print; but how could I avoid it? The dead and the living, my friends and my foes, at home and abroad, call'd upon me to say something; and the reputation of an ³² History which I and all the world value, must have suffered, had I continued silent. I have printed it here, in hopes, that somebody may venture to reprint it in England, notwithstanding those two frightening words at the close of it ³³. Whether that happens or not, it is fit you should have a sight of it, who, I know, will read it with some degree of satisfaction, as it is mine, tho' it should have (as it really has) nothing else to recommend it. Such as it is, *Extremum hoc munus morientis habeto*; for that may well be the case, considering that within a few months I am entering into my seventieth year: after which, even the healthy and the happy cannot much depend upon life, and will not, if they are wise, much desire it. Whenever I go, you will lose a friend who loves and values you extremely,

³² Earl of Clarendon's.

³³ The Bishop's Name, set to his Vindication of Bishop Smalridge, Dr. Aldrich, and himself, from the scandalous Reflections of Oldmixon, relating to the Publication of Lord Clarendon's History. Paris, 1731. 4to. since reprinted in England. P.

if in my circumstances I can be said to be lost to any one, when dead, more than I am already whilst living. I expected to have heard from you by Mr. Morice, and wondered a little that I did not; but he owns himself in a fault, for not giving you due notice of his motions. It was not amiss that you forebore writing, on a head wherein I promis'd more than I was able to perform. Disgraced men fancy sometimes, that they preserve an influence, where when they endeavour to exert it, they soon see their mistake. I did so, my good friend, and acknowledge it under my hand. You sounded the coast, and found out my error, it seems, before I was aware of it; but enough on this subject.

What are they doing in England to the honour of Letters; and particularly what are you doing? *Ipsæ quid audes? Quæ circumvolitas agilis Thyma?* Do you pursue the Moral plan you marked out, and seemed sixteen months ago so intent upon? Am I to see it perfected e'er I die, and are you to enjoy the reputation of it while you live? or do you rather chuse to leave the marks of your friendship, like the legacies of a will, to be read and enjoyed only by those who survive you? Were I as near you as I have been, I should hope to peep into the manuscript before it was finished. But alas! there is, and will ever probably be a great deal of land and sea between us. How many books have come out of late in your parts, which you think I should be glad in the peruse? Name them: The catalogue, I believe, will not cost you much trouble. They must be good ones indeed to challenge any part of my time, now I have so little of it left. I, who squandered whole days heretofore, now husband hours when the

glafs begin to run low, and care not to mifpend them on trifles. At the end of the Lottery of Life, our laft minutes, like tickets left in the wheel, rife in their valuation: They are not of fo much worth perhaps in themfelves as thofe which preceded, but we are apt to prize them more, and with reafon. I do fo, my dear friend, and yet think the moft precious minutes of my life are well employ'd, in reading what you write. But this is fatisfaction I cannot much hope for, and therefore muft betake myfelf to others lefs entertaining. Adieu! dear Sir, and forgive me engaging with one, whom you, I think, have reckoned among the heroes of the Dunciad. It was neceffary for me either to accept of his dirty Challenge, or to have fuffered in the efteem of the world by declining it.

My refpects to your Mother; I fend one of thefe papers for Dean Swift, if you have an opportunity, and think it worth while to convey it. My Country at this diftance feems to me a ftrange fight, I know not how it appears to you, who are in the midft of the fcene, and yourfelf a part of it; I wifh you would tell me. You may write fafely to Mr. Morice, by the honeft hand that conveys this, and will return into thefe parts before Christmas; fketchn out a rough draught of it, that I may be able to judge whether a return to it be really eligible, or whether I fhould not, like the Chemift in the bottle, upon hearing Don Quevedo's account of Spain, defire to be corked up again.

After all, I do and muft love my Country, with all its fauts and blemifhes; even that part of the conftitution which wounded me unjuftly, and itfelf through my fide, fhall ever be dear to me. My laft wifh fhall

be like that of father Paul, *Esto perpetua!* and when I die at a distance from it, it will be in the same manner as Virgil describes the expiring Peloponnesian,

Sternitur,
et dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos.

Do I still live in the memory of my friends, as they certainly do in mine? I have read a good many of your paper squabbles about me, and am glad to see such free concessions on that head, tho' made with no view of doing me a pleasure, but merely of loading another.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXV.

From the Bishop of ROCHESTER.

On the Death of his Daugther.

Montpelier, Nov. 20, 1729.

I Am not yet Master enough of myself, after the late wound I have receiv'd, to open my very heart to you, and am not content with less than that, whenever I converse with you. My thoughts are at present vainly, but pleasingly employ'd, on what I have lost, and can never recover. I know well I ought, for that reason, to call them off to other subjects, but hitherto I have not been able to do it. By giving them the rein a little, and suffering them to spend their force, I hope

in some time to check and subdue them. *Multis fortunæ vulneribus perculsus, huic uni me imparem sensi, et pene succubui.* This is weakness, not wisdom, I own; and on that account fitter to be trusted to the bosom of a friend, where I may safely lodge all my infirmities. As soon as my mind is in some measure corrected and calm'd, I will endeavour to follow your advice, and turn it to something of use and moment; if I have still life enough left to do any thing that is worth reading and preserving. In the mean time I shall be pleas'd to hear that you proceed in what you intend, without any such melancholy interruption as I have met with. Your mind is as yet unbroken by age and ill accidents, your knowledge and judgment are at the height: use them in writing somewhat that may teach the present and future times, and if not gain equally the applause of both, may yet raise the envy of the one, and secure the admiration of the other. Employ not your precious moments, and great talents, on little men and little things; but chuse a subject every way worthy of you, and handle it as you can, in a manner which no-body else can equal or imitate. As for me, my abilities, if I ever had any, are not what they were: and yet I will endeavour to recollect and employ them.

gelidus tardante senectâ

Sanguis hebet, frigentque effæto in corpore vires.

However, I should be in grateful to this place, if I did not own that I have gained upon the gout in the south of France, much more than I did at Paris: tho' even there I sensibly improved. I believe my cure had been

perfected, but the earnest desire of meeting One I dearly loved, called me abruptly to Montpelier; where after continuing two months, under the cruel torture of a sad and fruitless expectation, I was forced at last to take a long journey to Toulouse; and even there I had miss'd the person I sought, had she not, with great spirit and courage, ventured all night up the Garonne to see me, which she above all things desired to do before she died. By that means she was brought where I was, between seven and eight in the morning, and liv'd twenty hours afterwards, which time was not lost on either side, but pass'd in such a manner as gave great satisfaction to both, and such as on her part, every way became her circumstances and character. For she had her senses to the very last gasp, and exerted them to give me, in those few hours, greater marks of Duty and Love than she had done in all her life time, tho' she had never been wanting in either. The last words she said to me were the kindest of all; a reflection on the goodness of God, which had allow'd us in this manner to meet once more, before we parted for ever. Not many minutes after that, she laid herself on her pillow, in a sleeping posture,

placidaque ibi demum morte quievit.

Judge you, S'r, what I felt, and still feel on this occasion, and spare me the trouble of describing it. At my Age, under my Infirmities, among utter Strangers, how shall I find out proper reliefs and supports? I can have none, but those with which Reason and Religion furnish me, and those I lay hold on, and grasp as fast as I can. I hope that He, who laid the burthen upon me

(for wise and good purposes no doubt) will enable me to bear it, in like manner as I have born others, with some degree of fortitude and firmness.

You see how ready I am to relapse into an argument which I had quitted once before in this letter. I shall probably again commit the same fault, if I continue to write; and therefore I stop short here, and with all sincerity, affection, and esteem, bid you adieu! till we meet either in this world, if God pleases, or else in another.

I am, &c.



LETTERS

TO AND FROM

MR. GAY,

From 1714 to 1732.

LETTER I.

Binfield, Nov. 13, 1712.

YOU writ me a very kind Letter some months ago, and told me you were then upon the point of taking a journey into Devonshire. That hindered my answering you, and I have since several times inquired of you, without any satisfaction; for so I call the knowledge of your welfare, or of any thing that concerns you. I past two months in Suffex, and since my return have been again very ill. I writ to Lintot in hopes of hearing of you, but had no answer to that point. Our friend Mr. Cromwell too has been silent all this year; I believe he has been displeased at some or other of my freedoms¹, which I very innocently take, and most

¹ Wee see by the letters to Mr. Cromwell, that Mr. Pope was used to railly him on his turn for trifling and pedantic criticism. So he lost his two early friends, Cromwell and Wycherly, by his zeal to correct the bad poetry of the one, and the bad taste of the other.

with those I think most my friends. But this I know nothing of; perhaps he may have opened to you: and if I know you right, you are of a temper to cement friendships, and not to divide them. I really much love Mr. Cromwell, and have a true affection for yourself, which, if I had any interest in the world, or power with those who have, I should not be long without manifesting to you. I desire you will not, either out of modesty, or a vicious distrust of another's value for you (those two eternal foes to merit) imagine that your letters and conversation are not always welcome to me. There is no man more intirely fond of good-nature or ingenuity than myself, and I have seen too much of those qualities in you to be any thing less than

Your, &c.

LETTER II.

Dec. 24, 1721.

IT has been my good fortune within this month past, to hear more things that have pleas'd me than (I think) almost in all my time beside. But nothing upon my word has been so home-felt a satisfaction as the news you tell me of yourself: and you are not in the least mistaken, when you congratulate me upon your own good success: for I have more people out of whom to be happy, than any ill-natur'd man can boast of. I may with honesty affirm to you, that notwithstanding the many inconveniences and disadvantages they commonly talk of in the *Res angusta domi*, I have never

found any other, than the inability of giving people of merit the only certain proof of our value for them, in doing them some real service. For after all, if we could but think a little, self-love might make us philosophers, and convince us *quantuli indiget Natura!* Ourselves are easily provided for; 'tis nothing but the circumstantial, and the Apparatus or equipage of human life, that costs so much the furnishing. Only what a luxurious man wants for horses, and footmen, a good-natur'd man wants for his friends, or the indigent.

I shall see you this winter with much greater pleasure than I could the last; and, I hope, as much of your time, as your attendance on the Duchess ^a will allow you to spare to any friend, will not be thought lost upon one who is as much so as any man. I must also put you in mind, though you are now secretary to this Lady, that you are likewise secretary to nine other Ladies, and are to write sometimes for them too. He who is forced to live wholly upon those Ladies favours is indeed in as precarious a condition as any. He who does what Chaucer says for sustenance but they are very agreeable companions, like other Ladies, when a man only passes a night or so with them at his leisure, and away. I am

Your, &c.

^a Duchess of Monmouth, to whom he was just then made Secretary. P.

LETTER III.

Aug. 23, 1713.

JUST as I receiv'd yours, I was set down to write to you, with some shame that I had so long deferred it. But I can hardly repent my neglect, when it gives me the knowledge how little you insist upon ceremony, and how much a greater share in your memory I have, than I deserve. I have been near a week in London, where I am like to remain, till I become, by Mr. Jervas's help, *Elegans Formarum Spectator*. I begin to discover beauties that were till now imperceptible to me. Every corner of an eye, or turn of a nose or ear, the smallest degree of light or shade on a cheek, or in a dimple, have charms to distract me. I no longer look upon Lord Plausible as ridiculous, for admiring a Lady's fine tip of an ear and pretty elbow (as the *Plain-Dealer* has it) but am in some danger even from the ugly and disagreeable, since they may have their retired beauties, in one trait or other about them. You may guess in how uneasy a state I am, when every day the performances of others appear more beautiful and excellent, and my own more despicable. I have thrown away three Dr. Swifts, each of which was once my vanity, two Lady Bridgwaters, a Duchess of Montague, besides half a dozen Earls, and one knight of the garter. I have crucified Christ over again in effigie, and made a Madona as old as her mother St. Anne. Nay, what is yet more miraculous, I have rivall'd St. Luke himself in painting, and as, 'tis said, an

angel came and finish'd his piece, so, you would swear, a devil put the last hand to mine, 'tis so begrim'd and smutted. However, I comfort myself with a Christian reflection, that I have not broken the commandment, for my pictures are not the likeness of any thing in heaven above, or in earth below, or in the water under the earth. Neither will any body adore or worship them, except the Indians should have a sight of them, who, they tell us, worship certain idols purely for their ugliness.

I am very much recreated and refreshed with the news of the advancement of the *Fan* 3, which, I doubt not, will delight the eye and sense of the fair, as long as that agreeable machine shall play in the hands of posterity. I am glad your fan is mounted so soon, but I would have you varnish and glaze it at your leisure, and polish the sticks as much as you can. You may then cause it to be borne in the hands of both sexes, no less in Britain, than it is in China; where it is ordinary for a Mandarin to fan himself cool after a debate, and a Statesman to hide his face with it when he tells a grave lie.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

DEAR MR. GAY,

Sept. 23, 1714.

Welcome to your native soil 4! welcome to your friends! thrice welcome to me! whether returned

3 A Poem of Mr. Gay's, so intitled.

4 In the beginning of this year Mr. Gay went over to Hanover with the Earl of Clarendon, who was sent thither by Q. Anne. On

in glory, blest with courtinterest, the love and familiarity of the great, and fill'd with agreeable hopes; or melancholy with dejection, contemplative of the changes of fortune, and doubtful for the future: Whether return'd a triumphant Whig, or a desponding Tory, equally all hail! equally beloved and welcome to me! If happy, I am to partake in your elevation; if unhappy, you have still a warm corner in my heart, and a retreat at Binfield in the worst of times at your service. If you are a Tory, or thought so by any man, I know it can proceed from nothing but your gratitude to a few people who endeavour'd to serve you, and whose politics were never your concern. If you are a Whig, as I rather hope, and, as I think, your principles and mine (as brother poets) had ever a bias to the side of Liberty, I know you will be an honest man, and an inoffensive one. Upon the whole, I know, you are incapable of being so much of either party as to be good for nothing. Therefore once more, whatever you are, or in whatever state you are, all hail!

One or two of your old friends complain'd they had heard nothing from you since the Queen's death: I told them no man living lov'd Mr. Gay better than I, yet I had not once written to him in all his voyage. This I thought a convincing proof, how truly one may be a friend to another without telling him so every month. But they had reasons to themselves to alledge in your excuse; as men who really value one another, will never want such as make their friends and themself-

her death they returned to England: and it was on this occasion that Mr. Pope met him with this friendly welcome.

ves easy. The late Universal concern in public affairs, threw us all into a hurry of spirits: even I, who am more a Philosopher than to expect any thing from any Reign, was borne away with the current, and full of the expectation of the Successor: During your journeys I knew not whither to aim a letter after you; that was a sort of shooting flying: add to this the demand Homer had upon me, to write fifty verses a day, besides learned notes, all which are at a conclusion for this year. Rejoice with me, O my friend, that my labour is over; come and make merry with me in much feasting: We will feed among the lilies (by the lilies I mean the Ladies.) Are not the Rosalinda's of Britain as charming as the Bloufalinda's of the Hague? or have the two great Pastoral poets of our nation renounced love at the same time? for Philips, immortal Philips hath deserted, yea, and in a rustic manner kicked, his Rosalind. Dr. Parnelle and I have been inseparable ever since you went. We are now at the Bath, where (if you are not, as I heartily hope, better engaged) your coming would be the greatest pleasure to us in the world. Talk not of expences: Homer shall support his children. I beg a line from you directed to the Post-house in Bath. Poor Parnelle is in an ill state of health.

Pardon me if I add a word of advice in the poetical way. Write something on the King, or Prince, or Princess. On whatsoever foot you may be with the court, this can do no harm — I shall never know where to end, and am confounded in the many things I have to say to you, tho' they all amount but to this, that I am entirely, as ever,

Your, &c.

LETTER V.

London, Nov. 8, 1717.

I Am extremely glad to find by a Letter of yours to Mr. Fortescue, that you have received one from me; and I beg you to keep as the greatest of curiosities, that letter of mine which you received, and I never writ.

But the truth is, that we were made here to expect you in a short time, that I was upon the ramble most part of the Summer, and have concluded the season in grief, for the death of my poor father.

I shall not enter into a detail of my concerns and troubles, for two reasons; because I am really afflicted and need no airs of grief, and because they are not the concerns and troubles of any but myself. But I think you (without too great a compliment) enough my friend, to be pleas'd to know he died easily, without a groan, or the sickness of two minutes; in a word, as silently and peacefully as he lived.

Sic mihi contingat vivere, sicque mori!

I am not in the humour to say gay things, nor in the affectation of avoiding them. I can't pretend to entertain either Mr. Pulteney or you, as you have done both my Lord Burlington and me, by your letter to Mr. Lowndes ⁵. I am only sorry you have no greater

⁵ A Poem intituled, *To my ingenious and worthy friend W. Lowndes, Esq. Author of that celebrated treatise in Folio, called the LAND-TAX BILL.*

quarrel to Mr. Lowndes, and wish you paid some hundreds a year to the land-tax. That gentleman is lately become an inoffensive person to me too; so that we may join heartily in our addressee to him, and (like true patriots) rejoice in all that good done to the nation and government, to which we contribute nothing ourselves.

I should not forget to acknowledge your letter sent from Aix; you told me then that writing was not good with the waters, and, I find since, you are of my opinion, that 'tis as bad without the waters. But, I fancy, it is not writing but thinking, that is so bad with the waters; and then you might write without any manner of prejudice, if you writ like our brother Poets of these days.

The Dukes, Lord Warwick, Lord Stanhope, Mrs. Bellenden, Mrs. Lepell, and I can't tell who else, had your letters: Dr. Arbuthnot, and I expect to be treated like friends. I would send my services to Mr. Pulteney, but that he is out of favour at court; and make some compliment to Mrs. Pulteney, if she were not a Whig. My Lord Burlington tells me she has much out-shin'd all the French ladies, as she did the English before: I am sorry for it, because it will be detrimental to our holy religion, if heretical women should eclipse those Nuns and orthodox Beauties, in whose eyes alone lie all the hopes we can have, of gaining such fine gentlemen as you to our church.

Your, &c.

I wish you joy of the birth of the young prince, because he is the only prince we have from

whom you have had no expectations and no disappointments.

LETTER VI.

From Mr. GAY to Mr. F —.

Stanton Harcourt, Aug. 9, 1718.

THE only news that you can expect to have from me here, is news from heaven, for I am quite out of the world, and there is scarce any thing can reach me except the noise of thunder, which undoubtedly you have heard too. We have read in old authors of high towers levell'd by it to the ground, while the humble valleys have escap'd: the only thing that is proof against it is the laurel, which, however, I take to be no great security to the brains of modern authors. But to let you see that the contrary to this often happens, I must acquaint you, that the highest and most extravagant heap of towers in the universe, which is in this neighbourhood, stand still undefaced, while a cock of barley in our next field has been consumed to ashes. Would to God that this heap of barley had been all that had perished! for unhappily beneath this little shelter sat two much more constant Lovers than ever were found in Romance under the shade of a beech-tree. John Hewet was a well-set man of about five and twenty, Sarah Drew might be rather called comely than beautiful, and was about the same age. They had pass'd thro' the various labours

of the year together, with the greatest satisfaction; if she milk'd, 'twas his morning and evening care, to bring the cows to her hand; it was but last fair that he bought her a present of green silk for her straw hat, and the posie on her silver ring was of his chusing. Their love was the talk of the whole neighbourhood; for scandal never affirmed, that they had any other views than the lawful possession of each other in marriage. It was that very morning that he had obtain'd the consent of her parents, and it was but till the next week that they were to wait to be happy. Perhaps in the intervals of their work they were now talking of the wedding cloaths, and John was suiting several sorts of poppies and field flowers to her complexion, to chuse her a knot for the wedding-day. While they were thus busied, (it was on the last of July between two or three in the afternoon) the clouds grew black, and such a storm of lightning and thunder ensued, that all the labourers made the best of their way to what shelter the trees and hedges afforded. Sarah was frighted, and fell down in a swoon, on a heap of barley. John, who never separated from her, sat down by her side, having raked together two or three heaps, the better to secure her from the storm. Immediately there was heard so loud a crack, as if heaven had split asunder; every one was now solicitous for the safety of his neighbour, and called to one another throughout the field: No answer being returned to those who called to our Lovers, they stept to the place where they lay; they perceived the barley all in a smoke, and then spied this faithful pair: John with one arm about Sarah's neck, and the other held over her, as to screen

her from the lightning. They were struck dead, and stiffen'd in this tender posture. Sarah's left eye-brow was sing'd, and there appeared a black spot on her breast: her lover was all over black, but not the least signs of life were found in either. Attended by their melancholy companions, they were convey'd to the town, and the next day were inter'd in Stanton-Harcourt Church-yard. My Lord Harcourt, at Mr. Pope's and my request, has caused a stone to be placed over them, upon condition that we furnish'd the Epitaph, which is as follows;

*When Eastern lovers feed the fun'ral fire,
On the same pile the faithful pair expire:
Here pitying Heaven that virtue mutual found,
And blasted both, that it might neither wound.
Hearts so sincere th' Almighty saw well pleas'd,
Sent his own lightning, and the victims seiz'd.*

But my Lord is apprehensive the country people will not understand this, and Mr. Pope says he'll make one with something of Scripture in it, and with as little of poetry as Hopkins and Sternhold ⁶.

Your, &c.

⁶ The Epitaph was this,

Near this place lie the bodies of
JOHN HEWET and MARY DREW,
an industrious young Man
and Virtuous Maiden of this Parish;
Who being at Harvest-Work
(with several others)
were in one instant killed by Lightning
the last day of July 1718.

LETTER VII.

DEAR GAY,

Sept. 11, 1722.

I Thank you for remembering me ; I would do my best to forget myself, but that, I find, your idea is so closely connected to me, that I must forget both together, or neither. I am sorry I could not have a glympse either of you, or of the Sun (your father) before you went for Bath : But now it pleases me to see him, and hear of you. Pray put Mr. Congreve in mind that he has one on this side of the world who loves him ; and that there are more men and women in the universe than Mr. Gay and my Lady Duchefs. There are ladies in and about Richmond, that pretend to value him and yourself ; and one of them at least may be thought to do it without affectation, namely Mrs. Howard.

Pray consult with Dr. Arbuthnot and Dr. Chene, to what exact pitch your belly may be suffer'd to swell, not to outgrow theirs, who are, yet, your betters. Tell Dr. Arbuthnot that even pigeon-pies and hogs.

Think not, by rig'rous Judgment seiz'd,
A Pair so faithful could expire;
Victims so pure Heav'n saw well pleas'd,
And snatch'd them in celestial fire.
Live well, and fear no sudden fate;
When God calls Virtue to the grave,
Alike 'tis justice soon or late,
Mercy alike to kill or save.
Virtue unmov'd can hear the call,
And face the flash that melts the ball.

puddings are thought dangerous by our governors; for those that have been sent to the Bishop of Rochester are open'd and prophanely pry'd into at the Tower: 'Tis the first time dead pigeons have been suspected of carrying intelligence. To be serious, you and Mr. Congreve and the Doctor will be sensible of my concern and surprize at his commitment, whose welfare is as much my concern as any friend's I have. I think myself a most unfortunate wretch: I no sooner love, and, upon knowledge, fix my esteem to any man; but he either dies, like Mr. Craggs, or is sent to imprisonment like the Bishop. God send him as well as I wish him, manifest him to be as innocent as I believe him, and make all his enemies know him as well as I do, that they may think of him as well!

If you apprehend this period to be of any danger in being addressed to you, tell Mr. Congreve or the Doctor, it is writ to them. I am

Your, &c.

LETTER VIII.

July 13, 1722.

I Was very much pleas'd, not to say obliged, by your kind letter, which sufficiently warm'd my heart to have answer'd it sooner, had I not been deceived (a way one often is deceived) by hearkening to women; who told me that both Lady Burlington and yourself were immediately to return from Tunbridge, and that my Lord was gone to bring you back.

The world furnishes us with too many examples of what you complain of in yours, and, I assure you, none of them touch and grieve me so much as what relates to you. I think your sentiments upon it are the very same I should entertain: I wish those we call great men had the same notions, but they are really the most little creatures in the world; and the most interested, in all but one point; which is, that they want judgment ⁷ to know their greatest interest, to encourage and chuse honest men for their friends.

I have not once seen the person you complain of, whom I have of late thought to be, as the Apostle admonisheth, one flesh with his wife.

Pray make my sincere compliments to Lord Burlington, whom I have long known to have a stronger bent of mind to be all that is good and honourable, than almost any one of his rank.

I have not forgot yours to Lord Bolingbroke, tho' I hope to have speedily a fuller opportunity, he returning for Flanders and France next month.

Mrs. Howard has writ you something or other in a letter, which, she says, she repents. She has as much good nature as if she had never seen any ill-nature, and had been bred among lambs and turtle-doves, instead of Princes and court-ladies.

By the end of this week, Mr. Fortescue will pass a few days with me: we shall remember you in our partings, and wish you a fisher with us, on my grass

⁷ Instead of — *that they want judgment*, propriety of expression requires he should have said — *there where they want judgment* —

plat. In the mean time we wish you success as a
fisher of women at the Wells, a rejoicer of the com-
fortless and widow, and a play-fellow of the mai-
den. I am

Your, &c.

LETTER IX.

Sept. 11, 1722.

I Think it obliging in you to desire an account of
my health. The truth is, I have never been in a
worse state in my life, and find whatever I have try'd
as a remedy so ineffectual, that I give myself entirely
over. I wish your health may be set perfectly right
by the waters; and, be assured, I not only wish that,
and every thing else for you, as common friends wish,
but with a zeal not usual among those we call so. I am
always glad to hear of, and from you; always glad
to see you, whatever accidents or amusements have in-
terven'd to make me do either less than usual. I not
only frequently think of you, but constantly do my
best to make others do it, by mentioning you to all
your acquaintance. I desire you to do the same for
me to those you are now with: do me what you think
justice in regard to those who are my friends, and if
there are any, whom I have unwillingly deserved so
little of as to be my enemies, I don't desire you to
forfeit their opinion, or your own judgment in any
case. Let time convince those who know me not, that
I am an inoffensive person; tho' (to say truth) I don't

care how little I am indebted to Time, for the world is hardly worth living in, at least to one that is never to have health a week together. I have been made to expect Dr. Arbuthnot in town this fortnight, or else I had written to him. If he, by never writing to me, seems to forget me, I consider I do the same seemingly to him, and yet I don't believe he has a more sincere friend in the world than I am: therefore I will think him mine. I am his, Mr. Congreve's, and

Your, &c.

LETTER X.

I Faithfully assure you, in the midst of that melancholy with which I have been so long encompassed, in an hourly expectation almost of my Mother's death; there was no circumstance that render'd it more insupportable to me, than that I could not leave her to see you. Your own present escape from so imminent danger, I pray God may prove less precarious than my poor Mother's can be; whose life at best can be but a short reprieve, or a longer dying. But I fear, even that is more than God will please to grant me; for, these two days past, her most dangerous symptoms are returned upon her; and, unless there be a sudden change, I must in a few days, if not in a few hours, be depriv'd of her. In the afflicting prospect before me, I know nothing that can so much alleviate it as the view now given me (Heaven grant it may increase!) of your recovery. In the sincerity of my

Heart, I am excessively concern'd, not to be able to pay you, dear Gay, any part of the debt, I very gratefully remember, I owe you on a like sad occasion, when you was here comforting me in her last great Illness. May your health augment as fast as, I fear, hers must decline: I believe that would be very fast — may the Life that is added to you be past in good fortune and tranquillity, rather of your own giving to yourself, than from any expectations or trust in others. May you and I live together, without wishing more felicity or acquisitions than Friendship can give and receive without obligations to Greatness. God keep you, and three or four more of those I have known as long, that I may have something worth the surviving my Mother. Adieu, dear Gay, and believe me (while you live and while I live)

Your, &c.

As I told you in my last letter, I repeat it in this: Do not think of writing to me. The Doctor, Mrs. Howard, and Mrs. Blount give me daily accounts of you.

LETTER XI.

Sunday Night.

I Truly rejoiced to see your hand-writing, though I fear'd the trouble it might give you. I wish I had not known that you are still so excessively weak. Every day for a week past I had hopes of being able in a day or two more to see you. But my Mother advan-

ces not at all, gains no strength, and seems but upon the whole to wait for the next cold day to throw her into a Diarrhœa, that must, if it return, carry her off. This being daily to be fear'd, makes me not dare to go a day from her, lest that should prove to be her last. God send you a speedy recovery, and such a total one as, at your time of life, may be expected. You need not call the few words I writ to you either kind, or good; that was, and is, nothing. But whatever I have in my nature of kindness, I really have for you, and whatever good I could do, I would, among the very first, be glad to do to you. In your circumstance the old Roman farewell is proper, *Vive memor nostri*.

Your, &c.

I send you a very kind letter of Mr. Digby, between whom and me two letters have pass'd concerning you.

L E T T E R X I I .

NO words can tell you the great concern I feel for you; I assure you it was not, and is not lessened, by the immediate apprehension I have now every day lain under of losing my Mother. Be assur'd, no duty less than that should have kept me one day from attending your condition: I would come and take a room by you at Hampstead, to be with you daily, were she not still in danger of death. I have constantly had particular accounts of you from the Doctor,

which have not ceas'd to alarm me yet. God preserve your life, and restore your health. I really beg it for my own sake, for I feel I love you more than I thought in health, tho' I always loved you a great deal. If I am so unfortunate as to bury my poor Mother, and yet have the good fortune to have my prayers heard for you, I hope we may live most of our remaining days together. If, as I believe, the air of a better clime, as the Southern part of France, may be thought useful for your recovery, thither I would go with you infallibly; and it is very probable we might get the Dean with us, who is in that abandon'd state already in which I shall shortly be, as to other cares and duties. Dear Gay, be as chearful as your sufferings will permit: God is a better friend than a Court; even any honest man is a better. I promise you my entire friendship in all events, heartily praying for your recovery.

Your, &c.

Do not write, if you are ever so able: the Doctor tells me all.

LETTER XIII.

I Am glad to hear of the progress of your recovery, and the oftner I hear it, the better, when it becomes easy to you to give it me. I so well remember the consolation you were to me in my Mother's former illness, that it doubles my concern at this time not to be able to be with you, or you able to be with me.

Had I lost her, I would have been no where else but with you during your confinement. I have now past five weeks without once going from home, and without any company but for three or four of the days. Friends rarely stretch their kindness so far as ten miles. My Lord Bolingbroke and Mr. Bethel have not forgotten to visit me: the rest (except Mrs. Blount once) were contented to send messages. I never passed so melancholy a time, and now Mr. Congreve's death touches me nearly. It was twenty years and more that I have known him: Every year carries away something dear with it, till we outlive all tenderesses, and become wretched individuals again as we begun. Adieu! This is my birth-day, and this is my reflection upon it.

With added days if life give nothing new,

But, like a Sieve, let ev'ry Pleasure thro';

Some Joy still lost, as each vain Year runs o'er,

And all we gain, some sad Reflection more?

Is this a Birth-day? — 'Tis, alas! too clear,

'Tis but the Fun'ral of the former Year.

Your, &c.



LETTER XIV.

To the Honourable Mrs. —

June 20.

WE cannot omit taking this occasion to congratulate you upon the increase of your family, for your Cow is this morning very happily deliver'd of the better sort, I mean a female calf; she is as like her mother as she can stare. All Knights Errants Palfreys were distinguish'd by lofty names: we see no reason why a Pastoral Lady's sheep and calves should want names of the softer sound; we have therefore given her the name of Cæsar's wife, Calfurnia: imagining, that as Romulus and Reinus were suckled by a wolf, this Roman lady was suckled by a cow, from whence she took that name. In order to celebrate this birthday, we had a cold dinner at Marble hill. & Mrs. Susan offered us wine upon the occasion, and upon such an occasion we could not refuse it. Our entertainment consisted of flesh and fish, and the lettuce of a greek Island called Cos. We have some thoughts of dining there to-morrow, to celebrate the day after the birthday, and on Friday to celebrate the day after that, where we intend to entertain Dean Swift; because we think your hall the most delightful room in the world except that where you are. If it was not for you, we would forswear all courts; and really it is the most mortifying thing in nature, that

8 Mrs. Howard's house.

we can neither get into the court to live with you, nor you get into the country to live with us; so we will take up with what we can get that belongs to you, and make ourselves as happy as we can, in your house.

I hope we shall be brought into no worse company, when you all come to Richmond: for whatever our friend Gay may wish as to getting into Court, I disclaim it, and desire to see nothing of the court but yourself, being wholly and solely

Your, &c.

L E T T E R X V.

July 21.

YOU have the same share in my memory that good things generally have; I always know (whenever I reflect) that you should be in my mind; only I reflect too seldom. However, you ought to allow me the indulgence I allow all my friends (and if I did not, they would take it) in consideration that they have other avocations, which may prevent the proofs of their remembering me, tho' they preserve for me all the friendship and good-will which I deserve from them. In like manner I expect from you, that my past life of twenty years may be set against the omission of (perhaps) one month: and if you complain of this to any other, 'tis you are in the spleen, and not I in the wrong. If you think this letter splenetic, consider I have just receiv'd the news of the death of a friend, whom I esteem'd almost as many years as you; poor Fenton. He died at Easthamstead,

of indolence and inactivity; let it not be your fate, but use exercise. I hope the Duchess⁹ will take care of you in this respect, and either make you gallop after her, or teize you enough at home to serve instead of exercise abroad. Mrs. Howard is so concern'd about you, and so angry at me for not writing to you, and at Mrs. Blount for not doing the same, that I am piqu'd with jealousy and envy at you, and hate you as much as if you had a great place at court; which you will confess a proper cause of envy and hatred, in any Poet militant, or unpension'd. But to set matters even, I own I love you; and own, I am, as I ever was and just as I ever shall be,

Your, &c.

LETTER XVI.

DEAR SIR,

Oct. 6, 1727.

I Have many years ago magnify'd in my own mind, and repeated to you, a ninth Beatitude, added to the eighth in the Scripture; „Blessed is he who expects „nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.“ I could find in my heart to congratulate you on this happy dismissal from all Court-dependance; I dare say I shall find you the better and the honefter man for it, many years hence: very probably the healthful-ler, and the chearfuller into the bargain. You are happily rid of many cursed Ceremonies, as well as of many ill, and vicious Habits, of which few or no

⁹ Of Queensberry.

men escape the infection, who are hackney'd and trammelled in the ways of a court. Princes indeed, and Peers (the lackies of Princes) and Ladies (the fools of Peers) will smile on you the less; but men of worth, and real friends will look on you the better. There is a thing, the only thing which Kings and Queens cannot give you (for they have it not to give) Liberty, and which is worth all they have; which, as yet, I thank God, Englishmen need not ask from their hands. You will enjoy that, and your own integrity, and the satisfactory consciousness of having *not* merited such graces from courts as are bestow'd only on the mean, servile, flattering, interested, and undeserving. The only steps to the favour of the Great are such compliances, such distant decorums, as delude them in their vanities, or engage them in their passions. He is their greatest favourite, who is the falsest: and when a man, by such vile gradations, arrives at the height of grandeur and power, he is then at best but in a circumstance to be hated, and in a condition to be hanged, for serving their ends: So many a Minister has found it!

I believe you did not want advice, in the letter you sent by my Lord Grantham; I presume you writ it not, without: and you could not have better, if I guess right at the person who agreed to your doing it, in respect to any Decency you ought to observe: for I take that person to be a perfect judge of decencies and forms. I am not without fears even on that person's account: I think it a bad omen: but what have I to do with Court-omens? — Dear Gay, adieu. I can only add a plain uncourtly speech: While you

are no body's servant, you may be any one's friend; and as such I embrace you, in all conditions of life. While I have a shilling, you shall have six-pence, nay eight-pence, if I can contrive to live upon a groat. I am faithfully

Your, &c.

LETTER XVII.

From Mr. GAY to Mr. POPE.

Aug. 2, 1728.

TWAS two or three weeks ago that I writ you a letter; I might indeed have done it sooner; I thought of you every postday upon that account, and every other day upon some account or other. I must beg you to give Mrs. B. my sincere thanks for her kind way of thinking of me, which I have heard of more than once from our friend at court, who seem'd in the letter she writ to be in high health and spirits. Considering the multiplicity of pleasures and delights that one is over-run with in those places, I wonder how any body hath health and spirits enough to support them: I am heartily glad she has, and whenever I hear so, I find it contributes to mine. You see I am not free from dependance, tho' I have less attendance than I had formerly; for a great deal of my own welfare still depends upon hers. Is the widow's house to be dispos'd of yet? I have not given up my pretensions to the Dean; if it was to be parted with, I wish one of us

had it; I hope you wish so too, and that Mrs. Blount and Mrs. Howard wish the same, and for the very same reason that I wish it. All I could hear of you of late hath been by advertisements in news-papers, by which; one would think the race of Curls was multiplied; and, by the indignation such fellows shew against you, that you have more merit than any body alive could have. Homer himself hath not been worse us'd by the French. I am to tell you that the Duchess makes you her compliments, and is always inclin'd to like any thing you do; that Mr. Congreve admires, with me, your fortitude: and loves, not envies your performance, for we are not Dunces. Adieu.

L E T T E R XVIII.

April 18, 1730.

IF my friendship were as effectual as it is sincere, you would be one of those people who would be vastly advantaged and enrich'd by it. I ever honour'd those Popes who were most famous for Nepotism, 'tis a sign that the old fellows loved Somebody, which is not usual in such advanced years. And I now honour Sir Robert Walpole for his extensive bounty and goodness to his private friends and relations. But it vexes me to the heart when I reflect, that my friendship is so much less effectual than theirs; nay so utterly useless that it cannot give you any thing, not even a dinner at this distance, nor help the General whom I greatly love, to catch one fish. My only consolation

is to think you happier than myself, and to begin to envy you, which is next to hating you (an excellent remedy for love.) How comes it that Providence has been so unkind to me (who am a greater object of compassion than any fat man alive) that I am forced to drink wine, while you riot in water, prepar'd with oranges by the hand of the Duchess of Queensberry? that I am condemn'd to live by a highway side, like an old Patriarch, receiving all guests, where my portico (as Virgil has it)

Mane salutantum totis vomit ædibus undam,

while you are wrapt into the Idalian Groves, sprinkled with rose-water, and live in burrage, balm, and burnet up to the chin, with the Duchess of Queensberry? that I am doom'd to the drudgery of dining at court with the ladies in waiting at Windsor, while you are happily banish'd with the Duchess of Queensberry? So partial is Fortune in her dispensations! for I deserved ten times more to be banish'd than you, and I know some Ladies who merit it better than even her Grace. After this I must not name any, who dare do so much for you as to send you their services. But one there is, who exhorts me often to write to you, I suppose, to prevent or excuse her not doing it herself; she seems (for that is all I'll say for a courtier) to wish you mighty well. Another, who is no courtier, frequently mentions you, and does certainly wish you well — I fancy, after all, they both do so.

I writ to Mr. Fortescue, and told him the pains you took to see him. The Dean is well; I have had many accounts of him from Irish evidence, but only

two letters these four months, in both which you are mentioned kindly: he is in the north of Ireland, doing I know not what, with I know not whom. Mr. Cleland always speaks of you: he is at Tunbridge, wondering at the superior carni-voracity of our friend: he plays now with the old Duchess; nay dines with her, after she has won all his money. Other news I know not, but that Counsellor Bickford has hurt himself, and has the strongest walking-staff I ever saw. He intends speedily to make you a visit with it at Amesbury. I am my Lord Duke's, my Lady Duchess's, Mr. Dormer's, General Dormer's; and

Your, &c.

L E T T E R X I X.

Sept. 11, 1730.

I May with great truth return your speech, that I think of you daily; oftener indeed than is consistent with the character of a reasonable man, who is rather to make himself easy with the things and men that are about him, than uneasy for those which he wants. And you, whose absence is in a manner perpetual to me, ought rather to be remembered as a good man gone, than breathed after as one living. You are taken from us here, to be laid up in a more blessed state with spirits of a higher kind: such I reckon his Grace and her Grace, since their banishment from an earthly court to a heavenly one, in each other and their friends; for, I conclude, none but true friends

will consort or associate with them afterwards. I can't but look upon myself (so unworthy as a man of Twitnam seems, to be rank'd with such rectify'd and sublimated beings as you) as a separated spirit too from Courts and courtly fopperies. But, I own, not altogether so divested of terrene matter, nor altogether so spiritualized, as to be worthy admission to your depths of retirement and contentment. I am tugg'd back to the world and its regards too often; and no wonder, when my retreat is but ten miles from the capital. I am within ear-shot of reports, within the vortex of lies and censures. I hear sometimes of the lampooners of beauty, the calumniators of virtue, the jokers at reason and religion. I presume these are creatures and things as unknown to you, as we of this dirty orb are to the inhabitants of the planet Jupiter; except a few fervent prayers reach you on the wings of the post, from two or three of your zealous votaries at this distance; as one Mrs. H. who lifts up her heart now and then to you, from the midst of the Colluvies and sink of human greatness at W — r; one Mrs. B. that fancies you may remember her while you liv'd in your mortal and too transitory state at Peterfham; one Lord B. who admir'd the Duchess before she grew a Goddess; and a few others.

To descend now to tell you what are our wants, our complaints, and our miseries here; I must seriously say, the loss of any one good woman is too great to be born easily: and poor Mrs. Rollinson, tho' a private woman, was such. Her husband is gone into Oxfordshire very melancholy, and thence to the Bath, to live on, for such is our fate, and duty.

Adieu. Write to me as often as you will, and (to encourage you) I will write as seldom as if you did not. Believe me

Your, &c.

L E T T E R X X.

DEAR SIR,

Oct. 1, 1730.

I Am something like the sun at this season, withdrawing from the world, but meaning it mighty well, and resolving to shine whenever I can again. But I fear the clouds of a long winter will overcome me to such a degree, that any body will take a farthing candle for a better guide, and more serviceable companion. My friends may remember my brighter days, but will think (like the Irishman) that the moon is a better thing when once I am gone. I don't say this with any allusion to my poetical capacity as a son of Apollo, but in my companionable one (if you'll suffer me to use a phrase of the Earl of Clarendon's) for I shall see or be seen of few of you this winter. I am grown too faint to do any good, or to give any pleasure. I not only, as Dryden finely says, feel my notes decay as a poet, but feel my spirits flag as a companion, and shall return again to where I first began, my books. I have been putting my library in order, and enlarging the chimney in it, with equal intention to warm my mind and body (if I can) to some life. A friend (a woman-friend. God help me!) with whom I have spent three or four hours a day these fifteen years, advised me to pass more

time in my studies: I reflected, she must have found some reason for this admonition, and concluded she would complete all her kindnesses to me by returning me to the employment I am fittest for; conversation with the dead, the old, and the worm-eaten.

Judge therefore if I might not treat you as a beatify'd spirit, comparing your life with my stupid state. For as to my living at Windsor with the ladies, &c. it is all a dream: I was there but two nights, and all the day out of that company. I shall certainly make as little court to others as they do to me; and that will be none at all. My Fair-weather friends of the summer are going away for London, and I shall see them and the butterflies together, if I live till next year; which I would not desire to do, if it were only for their sakes. But we that are writers, ought to love posterity, that posterity may love us; and I would willingly live to see the children of the present race, merely in hope they may be a little wiser than their Parents.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXI.

IT is true that I write to you very seldom, and have no pretence of writing which satisfies me, because I have nothing to say that can give you much pleasure: only merely that I am in being, which in truth is of little consequence to one from whose conversation I am cut off by such accidents or engagements as separate us. I continue, and ever shall, to wish you all

good and happiness : I wish that some lucky event might set you in state of ease and independency all at once ! and that I might live to see you as happy , as this silly world and fortune can make any one . Are we never to live together more , as once we did ? I find my life ebbing apace , and my affections strengthening as my age encreases ; not that I am worse , but better , in my health than last winter ; but my mind finds no amendment nor improvement , nor support to lean upon , from those about me : and so I feel myself leaving the world , as fast as it leaves me . Companions I have enough , friends few , and those too warm in the concerns of the world , for me to bear pace with ; or else so divided from me , that they are but like the dead whose remembrance I hold in honour . Nature , temper , and habit from my youth made me have but one strong desire ; all other ambitions , my person , education , constitution , religion , &c. conspired to remove far from me . That desire was , to fix and preserve a few lasting , dependable friendships : and the accidents which have disappointed me in it , have put a period to all my aims . So I am sunk into an idleness , which makes me neither care nor labour to be noticed by the rest of mankind ; I propose no rewards to myself , and why should I take any sort of pains ? here I sit and sleep , and probably here I shall sleep till I sleep for ever , like the old man of Verona . I hear of what passes in the busy world with so little attention , that I forget it the next day : and as to the learned world , there is nothing passes in it . I have no more to add , but that I am with the same truth as ever

Your , &c.

LETTER XXII.

Oct. 23, 1730.

YOur letter is a very kind one, but I can't say so pleasing to me as many of yours have been, thro' the account you give of the dejection of your spirits. I wish the too constant use of water does not contribute to it; I find Dr. Arbuthnot and another very knowing physician of that opinion. I also wish you were not so totally immersed in the country; I hope your return to Town will be a prevalent remedy against the evil of too much recollection. I wish it partly for my own sake. We have lived little together of late, and we want to be physicians for one another. It is a remedy that agreed very well with us both, for many years, and I fancy our constitutions would mend upon the old medicine of *Studiorum similitudo*, &c. I believe we both of us want whetting; there are several here who will do you that good office, merely for the love of wit, which seems to be bidding the town a long and last adieu. I can tell you of no one thing worth reading, or seeing; the whole age seems resolv'd to justify the Dunciad, and it may stand for a public Epitaph or monumental Inscription like that at Thermopylæ, on a *whole people perish'd*! There may indeed be a Wooden image or two of Poetry set up, to preserve the memory that there once were bards in Britain; and (like the Giants at Guildhall) show the bulk and bad taste of our ancestors: At present the poor Laureat¹⁰ and

¹⁰ Eusden.

Stephen Duck serve for this purpose; a drunken sot of a *Parson* holds forth the emblem of *Inspiration*, and an honest industrious *Tresher* not unaptly represents *Pains* and *Labour*. I hope this Phænomenon of Wiltshire has appear'd at Amesbury, or the Dukes will be thought insensible to all bright qualities and exalted genius's, in court and country alike. But he is a harmless man, and therefore I am glad.

This is all the news talk'd of at court, but it will please you better to hear that Mrs. Howard talks of you, tho' not in the same breath with the Thresher, as they do of me. By the way, have you seen or convers'd with Mr. Chubb, who is a wonderful Phænomenon of Wiltshire? I have read thro' his whole volume ¹¹ with admiration of the writer; tho' not always with approbation of the doctrine. I have past just three days in London in four months, two at Windsor, half an one at Richmond, and have not taken one excursion into any other country. Judge now whether I can live in my library. Adieu. Live mindful of one of your first friends, who will be so to the last. Mrs. Blount deserves your remembrance, for she never forgets you, and wants nothing of being a friend ¹².

¹¹ This was his quarto Volume, written before he had given any signs of those extravagancies, which have since rendered him so famous. As the Court set up Mr. Duck for the rival of Mr. Pope, the City at the same time considered Chubb, as one who would eclipse Locke. The modesty of the court Poet kept him sober in a very intoxicating situation, while the vanity of this newfashion'd Philosopher assisted his sage admirers in turning his head.

¹² Alluding to those lines in the Epist. on the characters of Women.

„With ev'ry pleasing, ev'ry prudent part,

„Say what can *Cloe* want? — She wants a heart.

I beg the Duke's and her Grace's acceptance of my services: the contentment you express in their company pleases me, tho' it be the bar to my own, in dividing you from us. I am ever very truly

Your, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

O^ct. 2, 1732.

SIR Clem. Cottrel tells me you will shortly come to town. We begin to want comfort in a few friends about us, while the winds whistle, and the waters roar. The sun gives us a parting look, but 'tis but a cold one; we are ready to change those distant favours of a lofty beauty, for a gross material fire that warms and comforts more. I wish you could be here till your family come to town: you'll live more innocently, and kill fewer harmless creatures, nay none, except by your proper deputy, the butcher. It is fit for conscience sake, that you should come to town, and that the Duchess should stay in the country, where no innocents of another species may suffer by her. I hope she never goes to church: the Duke should lock you both up, and less harm would be done. I advise you to make man your game, hunt and beat about here for coxcombs, and truss up Rogues in Satire: I fancy they'll turn to a good account, if you can produce them fresh, or make them keep: and their relations will come, and buy their bodies of you.

The death of Wilks leaves Cibber without a colleague, absolute and perpetual dictator of the stage, tho'

indeed while he lived he was but as Bibulus to Cæsar. However ambition finds something to be gratify'd with in a mere name; or else, God have mercy upon poor ambition! Here is a dead vacation at present, no politics at court, no trade in town, nothing stirring but poetry. Every man, and every boy, is writing verses on the Royal Hermitage: I hear the Queen is at a loss which to prefer; but for my own part, I like none so well as Mr. Poyntz's in Latin. You would oblige my Lady Suffolk if you tried your Muse on this occasion. I am sure I would do as much for the Duchess of Queensberry, if she desir'd it. Several of your friends assure me it is expected from you: one should not bear in mind, all one's life, any little indignity one receives from a Court; and therefore I am in hopes, neither her Grace will hinder you, nor you decline it.

The volume of Miscellanies is just publish'd, which concludes all our fooleries of that kind. All your friends remember you, and, I assure you, no one more than

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XXIV.

From Mr. GAY to Mr. POPE.

Oct. 7, 1732.

I Am at last return'd from my Somersetshire expedition, but since my return I cannot so much boast of my health as before I went, for I am frequently

out of order with my colical complaints, so as to make me uneasy and dispirited, tho' not to any violent degree. The reception we met with, and the little excursions we made were every way agreeable. I think the country abounds with beautiful prospects. Sir William Wyndham is at present amusing himself with some real improvements, and a great many visionary castles. We were often entertain'd with sea views and sea fish, and were at some places in the neighbourhood, among which, I was mightily pleased with Dunster-Castle near Minehead. It stands upon a great eminence, and hath a prospect of that town, with an extensive view of the Bristol Channel, in which are seen two small Islands call'd the Steep Holms and Flat Holms, and on t'other side we could plainly distinguish the divisions of fields on the Welsh coast. All this journey I perform'd on horseback, and I am very much disappointed that at present I feel myself so little the better for it. I have indeed followed riding and exercise for three months successively, and really think I was as well without it; so that I begin to fear the illness I have so long and so often complain'd of, is inherent in my constitution, and that I have nothing for it but patience ¹³.

As to your advice about writing Panegyric, 'tis what I have not frequently done. I have indeed done it sometimes against my judgment and inclinations, and I heartily repent of it. And at present, as I have no desire of reward, and see no just reason of praise, I think I had better let it alone. There are flatterers

¹³ Mr. Gay died the November following at the Duke of Queensberry's house in London, aged 46 years. P.

good enough to be found, and I would not interfere in any Gentleman's profession. I have seen no verses on these sublime occasions; so that I have no emulation: Let the patrons enjoy the authors, and the authors their patrons, for I know myself unworthy.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXV.

Mr. CLELAND to Mr. GAY ¹⁴.

Decemb. 16, 1731.

I Am astonish'd at the complaints occasion'd by a late Epistle to the Earl of Burlington; and I should be afflicted were there the least just ground for them. Had the writer attack'd Vice, at a time when it is not only tolerated but triumphant, and so far from being conceal'd as a Defect, that it is proclaimed with ostentation as a Merit; I should have been apprehensive of the consequence: Had he satirized Gamesters of a hundred thousand pounds fortune, acquir'd by such methods as are in daily practice, and almost universally encouraged: had he overwarmly defended the Religion of his country, against such books as come from every press, are publickly vended in every shop, and greedily bought by almost every rank of men; or had he called our excellent weekly writers by the same names which they openly bestow on the greatest men

¹⁴ This was written by the same hand that wrote the Letter to the Publisher, prefixed to the Dunciad.

in the Ministry, and out of the Ministry, for which they are all unpunished, and most rewarded: In any of these cases, indeed, I might have judged him too presumptuous, and perhaps have trembled for his rashness.

I could not but hope better for this small and modest Epistle, which attacks no one Vice whatsoever; which deals only in Folly, and not Folly in general, but a single species of it; that only branch, for the opposite excellency to which, the Noble Lord to whom it is written must necessarily be celebrated. I fancied it might escape censure, especially seeing how tenderly these Follies are treated, and really less accused than apologized for.

*Yet hence the Poor are cloath'd, the Hungry fed,
Health to himself, and to his Infants Bread
The Lab'rer bears.*

Is this such a crime, ~~that~~ to impute it to a man must be a grievous offence? 'Tis an innocent Folly, and much more beneficent than the want of it; for ill Taste employs more hands, and diffuses expence more than a good one. Is it a moral defect? No, it is but a natural one; a want of taste. It is what the best good man living may be liable to. The worthiest Peer may live exemplarily in an ill-favour'd house, and the best reputed citizen be pleased with a vile garden. I thought (I say) the author had the common liberty to observe a defect, and to compliment a friend for a quality that distinguishes him: which I know not how any quality should do, if we were not to remark that it was wanting in others.

But, they say, the satire is personal. I thought it could not be so, because all its reflections are on things. His reflections are not on the man, but his house, garden, &c. Nay, he respects (as one may say) the Persons of the Gladiator, the Nile, and the Triton: he is only sorry to see them (as he might be to see any of his friends) ridiculous by being in the wrong place, and in bad company. Some fancy, that to say, a thing is Personal, is the same as to say, it is Injust, not considering, that nothing can be Just that is not personal. I am afraid that „all such writings and discourses as „touch no man, will mend no man.“ The good-natured, indeed, are apt to be alarmed at any thing like satire; and the guilty readily concur with the weak for a plain reason, because the vicious look upon folly as their frontier:

Jam proximus ardet

Ucalegon.

No wonder those who know ridicule belongs to them, find an inward consolation in removing it from themselves as far as they can; and it is never so far, as when they can get it fixed on the best characters. No wonder those who are Food for Satirists should rail at them as creatures of prey; every beast born for our use would be ready to call a man so.

I know no remedy, unless people in our age would as little frequent the theatres, as they begin to do the churches; unless comedy were forsaken, satire silent, and every man left to do what seems good in his own eyes, as if there were no King, no Priest, no Poet, in Israel.

But I find myself obliged to touch a point, on which I must be more serious; it well deserves I should: I

mean the malicious application of the character of Timon, which, I will boldly say, they would impute to the person the most different in the world from a Man-hater, to the person whose taste and encouragement of wit have often been shewn in the rightest place. The author of that epistle must certainly think so, if he has the same opinion of his own merit as authors generally have; for he has been distinguished by this very person.

Why, in God's name, must a Portrait, apparently collected from twenty different men, be applied to one only? Has it his eye? no, it is very unlike. Has it his nose or mouth? no, they are totally differing. What then, I beseech you? Why, it has the mole on his chin. Very well; but must the picture therefore be his, and has no other man that blemish?

Could there be a more melancholy instance how much the taste of the public is vitiated, and turns the most salutary and seasonable physic into poison, than if amidst the blaze of a thousand bright qualities in a great man, they should only remark there is a shadow about him; as what eminence is without? I am confident the author was incapable of imputing any such to one, whose whole life (to use his own expression in print of him) is a *continued series of good and generous actions*.

I know no man would be more concerned, if he gave the least pain or offence to any innocent person; and none who would be less concerned, if the satire were challenged by any one at whom he would really aim at. If ever that happens, I dare engage, he will own it, with all the freedom of one whose censures are just, and who sets his name to them.

LETTER XXVI.

To the Earl of BURLINGTON.

MY LORD,

March 7, 1731.

THE clamour rais'd about my Epistle to you, could not give me so much pain, as I receiv'd pleasure in seeing the general zeal of the world in the cause of a Great man who is beneficent, and the particular warmth of your Lordship in that of a private man who is innocent.

It was not the Poem that deserv'd this from you; for as I had the honour to be your Friend, I could not treat you quite like a Poet: but sure the writer deserv'd more candor, even from those who knew him not, than to promote a report, which in regard to that noble person, was impertinent; in regard to me villainous. Yet I had no great cause to wonder, that a character belonging to twenty should be applied to one; since, by that means, nineteen would escape the ridicule.

I was too well content with my knowledge of that noble person's opinion in this affair, to trouble the public about it. But since Malice and Mistake are so long a dying, I have taken the opportunity of a third edition to declare his belief, not only of my innocence, but of their malignity; of the former of which my own heart is as conscious, as, I fear, some of theirs must be of the latter. His humanity feels a concern for the Injury done to me, while his great-

ness of mind can bear with indifference the insult offer'd to himself. ¹⁵

However, my Lord, I own, that critics of this sort can intimidate me, nay half incline me to write no more: That would be making the Town a compliment which, I think, it deserves; and which some, I am sure, would take very kindly. This way of Satire is dangerous, as long as slander rais'd by fools of the lowest rank, can find any countenance from those of a higher. Even from the conduct shewn on this occasion, I have learnt there are some who would rather be wicked than ridiculous; and therefore it may be safer to attack Vices than Follies. I will therefore leave my betters in the quiet possession of their Idols, their Groves, and their Highplaces; and change my subject from their pride to their meanness, from their vanities to their miseries: and as the only certain way to avoid misconstructions to lessen offence, and not to multiply ill-natured applications, I may probably, in my next, make use of real names instead of fictitious ones. I am,

My Lord,

Your most Affectionate, &c.

¹⁵ Alludes to the letter the Duke of Ch^x wrote to Mr. Pope on this occasion. P.



LETTER XXVII. 16

Cirencester.

IT is a true saying, that misfortunes alone prove one's friendships; they show us not only that of other people for us, but our own for them. We hardly know ourselves any otherwise. I feel my being forced to this Bathjourney as a misfortune; and to follow my own welfare preferably to those I love, is indeed a new thing to me: my health has not usually got the better of my tenderneffes and affections. I fet out with a heavy heart, wishing I had done this thing the last season; for every day I defer it, the more I am in danger of that accident which I dread the most, my Mother's death (especially should it happen while I am away.) And another Reflection pains me, that I have never, since I knew you, been so long separated from you, as I now must be. Methinks we live to be more and more strangers, and every year teaches you to live without me: This absence may, I fear, make my return less welcome and less wanted to you, than once it seem'd, even after but a fortnight. Time ought not in reason to diminish friendship, when it confirms the truth of it by experience.

The journey has a good deal disorder'd me, notwithstanding my resting place at Lord Bathurst's. My Lord is too much for me, he walks, and is in spirits all day long: I rejoice to see him so. It is a right distinction, that I am happier in seeing my friends so many degrees

above me, be it in fortune, health, or pleasures, than I can be in sharing either with them: for in these sort of enjoyments I cannot keep pace with them, any more than I can walk with a stronger man. I wonder to find I am a companion for none but old men, and forget that I am not a young fellow myself. The worst is, that reading and writing, which I have still the greatest relish for, are growing painful to my eyes. But if I can preserve the good opinion of one or two friends, to such a degree, as to have their indulgence to my weaknesses, I will not complain of life: And if I could live to see you consult your ease and quiet, by becoming independent on those who will never help you to either, I doubt not of finding the latter part of my life pleasanter than the former or present. My uneasinesses of body I can bear; my chief uneasiness of mind is in your regard. You have a temper that would make you *easy* and *beloved* (which is all the happiness one needs to wish in this world) and content with moderate things. All your point is not to lose that temper by sacrificing yourself to others, out of a mistaken tenderness, which hurts you, and profits not them. And this you must do soon, or it will be too late: Habit will make it as hard for you to live independent, as for L — to live out of a Court.

You must excuse me for observing what I think any defect in you: You grow too indolent, and give things up too easily: which would be otherwise, when you found and felt yourself your own: Spirits would come in, as ill-usage went out. While you live under a kind of perpetual dejection and oppression, nothing at all

belongs to you, not your own *Humour*, nor your own *Sense*.

You can't conceive how much you would find resolution rise, and chearfulness grow upon you, if you'd once try to live independent for two or three months. I never think tenderly of you but this comes across me, and therefore excuse my repeating it, for whenever I do not, I dissemble half that I think of you: Adieu, pray write, and be particular about your health.

L E T T E R XXVIII.¹⁷

YOUR letter dated at nine a clock on Tuesday (night, as I suppose) has sunk me quite. Yesterday I hoped; and yesterday I sent you a line or two for our poor Friend Gay, inclos'd in a few words to you; about twelve or one a clock you should have had it. I am troubled about that, tho' the present cause of our trouble be so much greater.¹⁸ Indeed I want a friend, to help me to bear it better. We want each other. I bear a hearty share with Mrs. Howard, who has lost a man of a most honest heart; so honest an one, that I wish her Master had none less honest about him. The world after all is a little pitiful thing; not performing any one promise it makes us, for the future, and every day taking away and annulling the joys of the past. Let us comfort one another, and, if possible, study to

¹⁷ To the same.

¹⁸ Mr. Gay's death, which happen'd in Nov. 1732, at the Duke of Queensberry's house in London, aged 46. P.

add as much more friendship to each other, as death has deprived us of in him: I promise you more and more of mine, which will be the way to deserve more and more of yours.

I purposely avoid saying more. The subject is beyond writing upon, beyond cure or ease by reason or reflection, beyond all but one thought, that it is the will of God.

So will the death of my Mother be! which now I tremble at, now resign to, now bring close to me, now set farther off: Every day alters, turns me about, and confuses my whole frame of mind. Her dangerous distemper is again return'd, her fever coming onward again, tho' less in pain; for which last however I thank God.

I am unfeignedly tired of the world, and receive nothing to be called a Pleasure in it, equivalent to countervail either the death of one I have so long lived with, or of one I have so long lived for. I have nothing left but to turn my thoughts to one comfort; the last we usually think of, tho' the only one we should in wisdom depend upon, in such a disappointing place as this. I sit in her room, and she is always present before me, but when I sleep. I wonder I am so well: I have shed many tears, but now I weep at nothing. I would above all things see you, and think it would comfort you to see me so equal - temper'd and so quiet. But pray dine here; you may, and she know nothing of it, for she dozes much, and we tell her of no earthly thing, lest it run in her mind; which often trifles have done. If Mr. Bethel had time, I wish he were your companion

hither. Be as much as you can with each other: Be assur'd I love you both, and be farther assur'd, that friendship will encrease as I live on.

L E T T E R XXIX.

To H U G H B E T H E L, E s q.

July 12, 1723.

IAssure you unfeignedly any memorial of your good-nature and friendliness is most welcome to me, who knew those tenders of affection from you are not like the common traffic of compliments and professions, which most people only give that they may receive; and is at best a commerce of Vanity, if not of Falsehood. I am happy in not immediately wanting the sort of good offices you offer: but if I did want them, I should not think myself unhappy in receiving them at your hands: this really is some compliment, for I would rather most men did me a small injury, than a kindness. I know your humanity, and, allow me to say, I love and value you for it: 'Tis a much better ground of love and value, than all the qualities I see the world so fond of: They generally admire in the wrong place, and generally most admire the things they don't comprehend, or the things they can never be the better for. Very few can receive pleasure or advantage from wit which they seldom taste, or learning which they seldom understand: much less from the quality, high birth, or shining circumstances of those to whom they profess esteem, and who will always remember how much they

are their Inferiors. But Humanity and sociable virtues are what every creature wants every day, and still wants more the longer he lives, and most the very moment he dies. It is ill travelling either in a ditch or on a terras; we should walk in the common way, where others are continually passing on the same level, to make the journey of life supportable by bearing one another company in the same circumstances. — Let me know how I may convey over the *Odysses* for your amusement in your journey, that you may compare your own travels with those of Ulysses: I am sure yours are undertaken upon a more disinterested, and therefore a more heroic motive. Far be the omen from you, of returning as he did, alone, without saving a friend.

There is lately printed a book ¹⁹ wherein all human virtue is reduced to one test, that of Truth, and branch'd out in every instance of our duty to God and man. If you have not seen it, you must, and I will send it together with the *Odysses*. The very women read it, and pretend to be charmed with that beauty which they generally think the least of. They make as much ado about *truth*, since this book appear'd, as they did about *health* when Dr. Cheyne's came out; and will doubtless be as constant in the pursuit of one, as of the other. Adieu.

¹⁹ Mr. Wollaston's book of *the Religion of Nature delineated*. The Queen was fond of it, and that made the reading, and the talking of it, fashionable.

L E T T E R X X X.

To the same.

Aug. 9, 1726.

I Never am unmindful of those I think so well of as yourself; their number is not so great as to confound one's memory. Nor ought you to decline writing to me, upon an imagination, that I am much employed by other people. For tho' my house is like the house of a Patriarch of old, standing by the highway side and receiving all travellers, nevertheless I seldom go to bed without the reflection, that one's chief business is to be really at home: and I agree with you in your opinion of company, amusements, and all the silly things which mankind would fain make pleasures of, when in truth they are labour and sorrow.

I condole with you on the death of your Relation, the E. of C. as on the fate of a mortal man: Esteem I never had for him, but concern and humanity I had: the latter was due to the infirmity of his last period, tho' the former was not due to the triumphant and vain part of his course. He certainly knew himself best at last, and knew best the little value of others, whose neglect of him, whom they so grossly follow'd and flatter'd in the former scene of his life, shew'd them as worthless as they could imagine him to be, were he all that his worst enemies believ'd of him: For my own part, I am sorry for his death, and wish he had lived long enough to see so much of the faith-

lessness of the world, as to have been above the mad ambition of governing such wretches as he must have found it to be compos'd of.

Tho' you could have no great value for this Great man, yet acquaintance itself, the custom of seeing the face, or entering under the roof, of one that walks along with us in the common way of the world, is enough to create a wish at least for his being above ground, and a degree of uneasiness at his removal. 'Tis the loss of an object familiar to us: I should hardly care to have an old post pull'd up, that I remember'd ever since I was a child. And add to this the reflection (in the case of such as were not the best of their Species) what their condition in another life may be, it is yet a more important motive for our concern and compassion. To say the truth, either in the case of death or life, almost every body and every thing is a cause or object for humanity, even prosperity itself, and health itself; so many weak pitiful incidentals attend on them.

I am sorry any relation of yours is ill, whoever it be, for you don't name the person. But I conclude it is one of those to whose houses, you tell me, you are going, for I know no invitation with you is so strong as when any one is in distress, or in want of your assistance: The strongest proof in the world of this, was your attendance on the late Earl.

I have been very melancholy for the loss of Mr. Blount. Whoever has any portion of good nature will suffer on these occasions; but a good mind rewards its own sufferings. I hope to trouble you as little as possible, if it be my fate to go before you. I am of

old Ennius's mind, *Nemo me decoret lachrymis* — I am but a *Lodger* here: this is not an abiding city, I am only to stay out my lease: for what has Perpetuity and mortal man to do with each other? But I could be glad you would take up with an Inn at Twickenham, as long as I am Host of it: if not, I would take up freely with any Inn of yours. — Adieu, dear Sir: Let us while away this life: and (if we can) meet in another.

L E T T E R XXXI.

To the same.

June 24, 1727.

YOU are too humane and considerate, (things few people can be charged with.) Do not say you will not expect letters from me; upon my word I can no more forbear writing sometimes to you, than thinking of you. I know the world too well, not to value you who are an example of acting, living, and thinking, above it, and contrary to it.

I thank God for my Mother's unexpected recovery, tho' my hope can rise no higher than from reprieve to reprieve, the small addition of a few days to the many she has already seen. Yet so short and transitory as this light is, it is all I have to warm or shine upon me; and when it is out, there is nothing else that will live for me, or consume itself in my service. But I would have you think this is not the chief motive of

my concern about her: Gratitude is a cheap virtue, one may pay it very punctually, for it costs us nothing, but our memory of the good done. And I owe her more good, than ever I can pay, or she at this age receive, if I could. I do not think the tranquility of the mind ought to be disturbed for many things in this world: but those offices that are necessary duties either to our friends or ourselves, will hardly prove any breach of it; and as much as they take away from our indolence and ease of body, will contribute to our peace and quiet of mind by the content they give. They often afford the highest pleasure; and those who do not feel that, will hardly ever find another to match it, let them love themselves ever so dearly. At the same time it must be own'd, one meets with cruel disappointments in seeing so often the best endeavours ineffectual to make others happy, and very often (what is most cruel of all) thro' their own means ²⁰. But still, I affirm, those very disappointments of a virtuous man are greater pleasures, than the utmost gratifications and successes of a mere self-lover.

The great and sudden event which has just now happened ²¹, puts the whole world (I mean this whole world) into a new state: The only use I have, shall, or wish to make of it, is to observe the disparity of men from themselves in a week's time: the desultory leaping and catching of new motions, new modes, new measures; and that strange spirit and life, with which men broken and disappointed resume their ho-

²⁰ See Letter XXVII from Cirencester.

²¹ The death of K. George the First, which happened the 11th of June, 1727.

pes, their solicitations, their ambitions! It would be worth your while as a Philosopher, to be busy in these observations, and to come hither to see the fury and bustle of the Bees this hot season, without coming so near as to be stung by them.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R X X X I I .

To the same.

June 17, 1728.

AFTER the publishing of my Boyish Letters to Mr. Cromwell, you will not wonder if I should forbear writing a letter again while I live; since I do not correspond with a friend upon the terms of any other free subject of this kingdom. But to you I can never be silent, or reserved; and, I am sure, my opinion of your heart is such, that I could open mine to you in no manner which I could fear the whole world should know. I could publish my own heart too, I will venture to say, for any mischief or malice there is in it: but a little too much folly or weakness might (I fear) appear, to make such a spectacle either instructive or agreeable to others.

I am reduced to beg of all my acquaintance to secure me from the like usage for the future, by returning me any letters of mine which they may have preserved; that I may not be hurt, after my death, by that which was the happiness of my life, their partiality and affection to me.

I have nothing of myself to tell you, only that I have had but indifferent health. I have not made a visit to London: Curiosity and the love of Dissipation die apace in me. I am not glad nor sorry for it, but I am very sorry for those who have nothing else to live on.

I have read much, but writ no more. I have small hopes of doing good, no vanity in writing, and little ambition to please a world not very candid or deserving. If I can preserve the good opinion of a few friends, it is all I can expect, considering how little good I can do even to them to merit it. Few people have your candour, or are so willing to think well of another from whom they receive no benefit, and gratify no vanity. But of all the soft sensations, the greatest pleasure is to give and receive mutual Trust. It is by Belief and firm Hope, that men are made happy in this life, as well as in the other. My confidence in your good opinion, and dependance upon that of one or two more, is the chief cordial drop I taste, amidst the Insipid, the Disagreeable, the Cloying, or the Dead-sweet, which are the common draughts of life. Some pleasures are too pert, as well as others too flat, to be relish'd long: and vivacity in some cases is worse than dulness. Therefore indeed for many years I have not chosen my companions for any of the qualities in fashion, but almost intirely for that which is the most out-of-fashion, sincerity. Before I am aware of it, I am making your panegyric, and perhaps my own too, for next to possessing the best of qualities in the esteeming and distinguishing those who possess it. I truly love and value you, and so I stop short.

LETTER XXXIII.

To the Earl of PETERBOROW.

MY LORD, Aug. 24, 1728.

I Presume you may before this time be returned, from the contemplation of many Beauties, animal and vegetable, in Gardens; and possibly some rational, in Ladies; to the better enjoyment of your own at Bevis Mount. I hope, and believe, all you have seen will only contribute to it. I am not so fond of making compliments to Ladies as I was twenty years ago, or I would say there are some very reasonable, and one in particular there. I think you happy, my Lord, in being at least half the year almost as much your own master as I am mine the whole year: and with all the disadvantageous incumbrances of quality, parts, and honour, as meer a gardener, loiterer, and labourer, as he who never had Titles, or from whom they are taken. I have an eye in the last of these glorious appellations to the style of a Lord degraded or attainted: methinks they give him a better title than they deprive him of, in calling him Labourer: *Agricultura*, says Tully, *proxima Sapientia*, which is more than can be said, by most modern Nobility, of Grace or Right Honourable, which are often *proxima Stultitia*. The Great Turk, you know, is often a Gardener, or of a meaner trade: and are there not (my Lord) some circumstances in which you would resemble the Great Turk? The two Paradises are not ill con-

ned, of Gardens and Gallantry; and some there are (not to name my Lord B.) who pretend they are both to be had, even in this life, without turning Musselmen.

We have as little politics here within a few miles of the Court (nay perhaps at the Court) as you at Southampton; and our Ministers, I dare say, have less to do. Our weekly histories are only full of the feasts given to the Queen and Royal Family by their servants, and the long and laborious walks her majesty takes every morning. Yet if the graver Historians hereafter shall be silent of this year's events, the amorous and anecdotal may make posterity some amends, by being furnished with the gallantries of the Great at home; and 'tis some comfort, that if the Men of the next age do not read of us, the Women may.

From the time you have been absent, I've not been to wait on a certain great man, thro' modesty, thro' respect. But for my comfort I fancy, that any great man will as soon forget one that does him no harm, as he can one that has done him any good. Believe me, my Lord, yours.

LETTER XXXIV.

From the Earl of PETERBOROW.

I Must confess that in going to Lord Cobham's, I was not led by curiosity. I went thither to see what I had seen, and what I was sure to like.

I had the idea of those gardens so fix'd in my imagination by many descriptions, that nothing surprized me, Immensity and Van Brugh appear in the whole, and in every part. Your joining in your letter animal and vegetable beauty, makes me use this expression: I confess the stately Sacharissa at Stow, but am content with my little Amoret.

I thought you indeed more knowing upon the subject, and wonder at your mistake: why will you imagine women insensible to Praise, much less to yours? I have seen them more than once turn from their Lover to their Flatterer. I am sure the Farmerefs at Bevis in her highest mortifications, in the middle of her Lent ²², would feel emotions of vanity, if she knew you gave her the character of a reasonable woman.

You have been guilty again of another mistake, which hinder'd me showing your letter to a friend; when you join two ladies in the same compliment, tho' you gave to both the beauty of Venus and the wit of Minerva, you would please neither.

If you had me into the Dunciad, I could not have been more disposed to criticise your letter. What, Sir, do you bring it in as a reproach, or as a thing uncommon to a Court, to be without Politics? With politics indeed the Richlieu's and such folks have brought about great things in former days; but what are they, Sir, who, without policy, in our times, can make ten Treaties in a year, and secure everlasting Peace?

²² The Countess of Peterborow, a Roman-catholic.

I can no longer disagree with you, tho' in jest. Oh how heartily I join with you in your contempt for Excellency and Grace, and in your Esteem of that most noble title, Loiterer. If I were a man of many plums, and a good heathen, I would dedicate a Temple to Laziness: No man sure could blame my choice of such a Deity; who considers, that, when I have been fool enough to take pains, I always met with some wise man able to undo my labours.

Your, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

YOU were in a very polemic humour when you did me the honour to answer my last. I always understood, like a true controvertist, that to answer is only to cavil and quarrel: however, I forgive you; you did it (as all Polemics do) to shew your parts. Else was it not very vexatious, to deny me to commend two women at a time? It is true, my Lord, you know women as well as men: but since you certainly love them better, why are you so uncharitable in your opinion of them? Surely one Lady may allow another to have the thing she herself least values, Reason, when Beauty is uncontested. Venus herself could allow Minerva to be Goddess of Wit, when Paris gave her the apple (as the fool herself thought) on a better account. I do say, that Lady P* is a reasonable woman; and, I think, she will not take it amiss, if I should insist upon esteeming her, instead of Toasting

her, like a silly thing I could name, who is the Venus of these days. I see you had forgot my letter, or would not let her know how much I thought of her in this reasonable way: but I have been kinder to you, and have shewn your letter to one who will take it candidly.

But, for God's sake what have you said about Politicians? you made me a great compliment in the trust you reposed in my prudence, or what mischief might not I have done you with some that affect that denomination? Your Lordship might as safely have spoken of Heroes. What a bluster would the God of the winds have made, had one that we know puff'd against Æolus, or (like Xerxes) whipp'd the seas? They had dialogued it in the language of the Rehearsal.

I'll give him flash for flash —

I'll give him dash for dash —

But all now is safe; the poets are preparing songs of joy, and Halcyon-days are the word.

I hope, my Lord, it will not be long before your dutiful affection brings you to town. I fear it will a little raise your envy to find all the Muses employed in celebrating a Royal work²³, your own partiality will think inferior to Bevis-Mount. But if you have any inclination to be even with them, you need but put three or four Wits into any hole in your Garden, and they will out-rhyme all Eaton and Westminster. I think, Swift, Gay, and I could undertake it, if you don't think our Heads too expensive: but the same hand that did the others, will do them as cheap. If

²³ The Hermitage.

all else should fail, you are sure at least of the head, hand, and heart of your servant.

Why should you fear any disagreeable news to reach us at Mount Bevis? Do as I do even within ten miles of London, let no news whatever come near you. As to public affairs we never knew a deader season: 'tis all silent, deep tranquillity. Indeed they say, 'tis sometimes so just before an Earthquake. But whatever happens, cannot we observe the wise neutrality of the Dutch, and let all about us fall by the ears? Or if you, my Lord, should be prick'd on by any old-fashioned notions of Honour and Romance, and think it necessary for the General of the Marines to be in action, when our Fleets are in motion; meet them at Spithead, and take me along with you. I decline no danger where the glory of Great-Britain is concern'd; and will contribute to empty the largest bowl of punch that shall be rigg'd out on such an occasion. Adieu, my Lord, and may as many Years attend you, as may be happy and honourable!

LETTER XXXVI.

From the Earl of PETERBOROW.

YOU must receive my letters with a just impartiality, and give grains of allowance for a gloomy or rainy day; I sink grievously with the weather-glass, and am quite spiritless when oppress'd with the thoughts of a Birthday or a Return.

Dutiful affection was bringing me to town, but indutiful laziness, and being much out of order, keep me in the country; however, if alive, I must make my appearance at the Birthday. Where you showed one letter you may shew the other; she that never was wanting in any good office in her power, will make a proper excuse, where a sin of Omission, I fear, is not reckoned as a venial sin.

I consent you shall call me polemic, or associate me to any sect or Corporation, provided you do not join me to the charitable Rogues or to the Pacific Politicians of the present age. I have read over ²⁴ Barkley in vain; and find, after a stroke given on the left, I cannot offer the right cheek for another blow: all I can bring myself to, is to bear mortification from the Fair sex with patience.

You seem to think it vexatious that I shall allow you but one woman at a time, either to praise, or love. If I dispute with you upon this point, I doubt every jury will give a verdict against me. So, Sir, with a Mahometan indulgence, I allow you pluralities, the favourite privilege of our church.

I find you do not mend upon correction; again I tell you, you must not think of women in a reasonable way: you know we always make Goddesses of those we adore upon earth; and do not all the good men tell us, we must lay aside Reason in what relates to the Deity?

'Tis well the Poets are preparing songs of joy: 'tis well to lay in antidotes of soft rhyme, against the

²⁴ Barkley's apology for the Quakers.

rough prose they may chance to meet with at Westminster. I should have been glad of any thing of Swift's: pray, when you write to him next, tell him I expect him with impatience, in a place as odd and as much out of the way as himself. Yours.

LETTER XXXVII.

From the same.

WHenever you apply as a good Papist to your female Mediatrix, you are sure of success; but there is not a full assurance of your entire submission to Mother-church, and that abates a little of your authority. However, if you will accept of country letters, she will correspond from the hay-cock, and I will write to you upon the side of my wheelbarrow: surely such letters might espace examination.

Your Idea of the Golden Age is, that every shepherd might pipe where he pleased. As I have lived longer, I am more moderate in my wishes, and would be content with the liberty of not piping where I am not pleased.

Oh how I wish, to myself and my friends a freedom which Fate seldom allows, and which we often refuse ourselves! why is our Shepherdess²⁵ in voluntary slavery? why must our Dean submit to the Colour of his coat and live absent from us? and why are you confined to what you cannot relieve?

²⁵ Mrs. H.

I seldom venture to give accounts of my journeys before-hand, because I take resolutions of going to London, and keep them no better than quarrelling lovers do theirs. But the devil will drive me thither about the middle of next month, and I will call upon you, to be sprinkled with holy water, before I enter the place of Corruption.

Your, &c.

LETTER XXXVIII.

From the same.

1732.

I Am under the greatest impatience to see Dr. Swift at Bevis-Mount, and must signify my mind to him by another hand, it not being permitted me to hold correspondence with the said Dean, for no letter of mine can come to his hands.

And whereas it is apparent, in this protestant land, most especially under the care of divine providence, that nothing can succeed or come to a happy issue but by Bribery; therefore let me know what he expects to comply with my desires, and it shall be remitted unto him.

For tho' I would not corrupt any man for the whole world, yet a benevolence may be given without any offence to conscience, every one must confess, that gratification and corruption are two distinct terms; nay at worst many good men hold, that for a good

end, some very naughty measures may be made use of.

But, Sir, I must give you some good news in relation to myself, because, I know, you wish me well; I am cur'd of some diseases in my old age which tormented me very much in my youth.

I was possess'd with violent and uneasy passions, such as a peevish concern for Truth²⁶, and a saucy love for my Country.

When a Christian Priest preached against the Spirit of the Gospel, when an English Judge determined against Magna Charta, when the Minister acted against Common Sense, I used to fret.

Now, Sir, let what will happen, I keep myself in temper: As I have no flattering hopes, so I banish all useless fears; but as to the things of this world, I find myself in a condition beyond expectation: it being evident from a late Parliamentary inquiry, that I have as much ready money, as much in the funds, and as great a personal estate as Sir Robert S-t-t-n.

If the Translator of Homer find fault with this unheroic disposition, or (what I more fear) if the Draper of Ireland accuse the Englishman of want of spirit: I silence you both with one line out of your own Horace. *Quid te exempta juvat spinis e pluribus una?* For I take the whole to be so corrupted, that a cure in any part would be of little avail.

Your, &c.

²⁶ As may be seen from his transactions with Fenwick in the year 1696 - 7.

L E T T E R X X X I X .

Dr. S W I F T to the E. of P E T E R B O R O W .

M Y L O R D ,

I Never knew or heard of any person so volatile, and so fix'd as your Lordship : You, while your imagination is carrying you through every corner of the world, where you have or have not been, can at the same time remember to do offices of favour and kindness to the meanest of your friends ; and in all the scenes you have passed, have not been able to attain that one quality peculiar to a great man, of forgetting every thing but injuries. Of this I am a living witness against you ; for being the most insignificant of all your old humble servants, you were so cruel as never to give me time to ask a favour, but prevented me in doing whatever you thought I desired, or could be for my credit or advantage.

I have often admired at the capriciousness of Fortune in regard to your Lordship. She hath forced Courts to act against their oldest, and most constant maxims ; to make you a General because you had courage and conduct ; an Ambassador, because you had wisdom and knowledge in the interests of Europe ; and an Admiral on account of your skill in maritime affairs : whereas, according to the usual method of Court proceedings, I should have been at the head of the Army, and you of the Church, or rather a Curate under the Dean of St. Patrick's.

The Archbishop of Dublin laments that he did not see your Lordship till he was just upon the point of leaving the Bath: I pray God you may have found success in that journey, else I shall continue to think there is a fatality in all your Lordship's undertakings, which only terminate in your own honour, and the good of the public, without the least advantage to your health or fortune.

I remember Lord Oxford's Ministry us'd to tell me, that not knowing where to write to you, they were forced to write at you. It is so with me, for you are in one thing an Evangelical man, that you know not where to lay your head, and, I think, you have no house. Pray, my Lord, write to me, that I may have the pleasure in this scoundrel country, of going about, and shewing my depending Parsons a letter from the Earl of Peterborow.

I am, &c.

LETTER XL.

To * * * * 27.

Sept. 13.

I Believe you are by this time immers'd in your vast Wood; and one may address to you as to a very abstracted person, like Alexander Selkirk, or the 28 Self-taught Philosopher. I should be very curious to

27 Lord Bathurst.

28 The title of an Arabic Treatise of the Life of Hai Ebn Yocktan.

know what sort of contemplations employ you. I remember the latter of those I mention'd, gave himself up to a devout exercise of making his head giddy with various circumrotations, to imitate the motions of the celestial bodies. I don't think it at all impossible that Mr. L* may be far advanced in that exercise, by frequent turns towards the several aspects of the heavens, to which you may have been pleased to direct him in search of prospects and new avenues. He will be tractable in time, as birds are tamed by being whirl'd about; and doubtless come not to despise the meanest shrubs or coppice-wood, tho' naturally he seems more inclined to admire God, in his greater works, the tall timber: for, as Virgil has it, *Non omnes arbusta juvant, humilesque myricæ*. I wish myself with you both, whether you are in peace or at war, in violent argumentation or smooth consent, over Gazettes in the morning, or over Plans in the evening. In that last article, I am of opinion your Lordship has a loss of me; for generally after the debate of a whole day, we acquiesced at night in the best conclusion of which human Reason seems capable in all great matters, to fall fast asleep! And so we ended, unless immediate Revelation (which ever must overcome human reason) suggested some new lights to us, by a Vision in bed. But laying aside Theory, I am told, you are going directly to Practice. Alas, what a Fall will that be? A new Building is like a new Church; when once it is set up, you must maintain it in all the forms, and with all the inconveniencies; then cease the pleasant luminous days of inspiration, and there is an end of miracles at once!

That this Letter may be all of a piece, I'll fill the rest with an account of a consultation lately held in my neighbourhood about designing a princely garden. Several Critics were of several opinions: One declar'd he would not have too much Art in it; for my notion (said he) of gardening is, that it is only sweeping Nature²⁹: Another told them that Gravel walks were not of a good taste, for all the finest abroad were of loose sand: A third advis'd peremptorily there should not be one Lyme-tree in the whole plantation: A fourth made the same exclusive clause extend to Horse-chestnuts, which he affirmed not to be Trees, but Weeds: Dutch Elms were condemn'd by a fifth; and thus about half the trees were proscribed, contrary to the Paradise of God's own planting, which is expressly said to be planted with *all trees*. There were some who could not bear Ever-greens, and call'd them Never-greens; some, who were angry at them only when cut into shapes, and gave the modern Gardeners the name of Ever-green Taylors; some, who had no dislike to Cones and Cubes, but would have them cut in Forest-trees; and some who were in a passion against any thing in shape, even against clipt hedges, which they call'd green walls. These (my Lord) are our Men of Taste, who pretend to prove it by tasting little or nothing. Sure such a Taste is like such a stomach, not a good one, but a weak one. We have the same sort of Critics in poetry; one is fond of nothing but Heroics, another cannot relish Tragedies, another hates Pastorals, all little Wits delight in Epigrams. Will you give me leave to add, there are the same in Divinity; whe-

²⁹ An expression of Sir T. H.

re many leading Critics are for rooting up more than they plant, and would leave the Lord's Vineyard either very thinly furnish'd, or very oddly trimm'd.

I have lately been with my Lord * who is a zealous yet a charitable Planter, and has so bad a Taste, as to like all that is good. He has a disposition, to wait on you in his way to the Bath, and, if he can go and return to London in eight or ten days, I am not without a hope of seeing your Lordship with the delight I always see you. Every where I think of you, and every where I wish for you. I am, &c.

L E T T E R X L I.

To Mr. C —.

Sept. 2, 1732.

I Assure you I am glad of your letter, and have long wanted nothing but the permission you now give me, to be plain and unreserved upon this head. I wrote to you concerning it long since; but a friend of yours and mine was of opinion, it was taking too much upon me, and more than I could be entitled to by the mere merit of long acquaintance, and good will. I have not a thing in my heart relating to any friend, which I would not, in my own nature, declare to all mankind. The truth is what you guess; I could not esteem your conduct, to an object of misery so near you as Mrs. —, and I have often hinted it to yourself: The truth is, I cannot yet esteem it for any reason I am able to see. But this I promise, I acquit you as far as your own mind acquits you. I have now no fur-

ther cause of complaint, for the unhappy Lady gives me now no farther pain; she is no longer an object either of yours or my compassion; the hardships done her, are lodg'd in the hands of God, nor has any man more to do in them, except the persons concern'd in occasioning them.

As for the interruption of our Correspondence, I am sorry you seem to put the Test of my friendship upon that, because it is what I am disqualified from toward my other acquaintance, with whom I cannot hold any frequent commerce. I'll name you the obstacles which I can't surmount: want of health, want of time, want of good eyes; and one yet stronger than them all, I write not upon the terms of other men. For however glad I might be, of expressing my respect, opening my mind, or venting my concerns, to my private friends; I hardly dare while there are Curlls in the world. If you please to reflect either on the impertinence of weak admirers, the malice of low enemies, the avarice of mercenary Booksellers, or the silly curiosity of people in general; you'll confess I have small reason to indulge correspondencies: in which too I want materials, as I live altogether out of town, and have abstracted my mind (I hope) to better things than common news. I wish my friends would send me back those forfeitures of my discretion, commit to my justice what I trusted only to their indulgence, and return me at the year's end those trifling letters, which can be to them but a day's amusement, but to me may prove a discredit as lasting and extensive, as the aforesaid weak admirers, mean enemies, mercenary scriblers, or curious simpletons, can make it.

I come now to a particular you complain of, my not answering your question about some Party-papers, and their authors. This indeed I could not tell you, because I never was, or will be privy to such papers: And if by accident, thro' my acquaintance with any of the writers, I had known a thing they conceal'd; I should certainly never be the Reporter of it.

For my waiting on you at your countryhouse, I have often wish'd it, it was my compliance to a superior duty that hinder'd me, and one which you are too good a Christian to wish I should have broken, having never ventur'd to leave my mother (at her great age) for more than a week, which is too little for such a journey.

Upon the whole, I must acquit myself of any act or thought, in prejudice to the regard I owe you, as so long and obliging an acquaintance and correspondent. I am sure I have all the good wishes for yourself and your family, that become a friend: There is no accident that can happen to your advantage, and no action that can redound to your credit, which I should not be ready to extol, or to rejoice in. And therefore I beg you to be assured, I am in disposition and will, tho' not so much as I would be in testimonies or writing,
(Yours, &c.)

L E T T E R XLII.

T O M R. R I C H A R D S O N.

Jan. 13, 1732.

I Have at last got my Mother so well, as to allow myself to be absent from her for three days. As

Sunday is one of them, I do not know whether I may propose to you to employ it in the manner you mentioned to me once. Sir Godfrey call'd imploying the pencil, the prayer of a painter, and affirmed it to be his proper way of serving God, by the talent he gave him. I am sure, in this instance, it is serving your friend; and, you know, we are allowed to do that (nay even to help a neighbour's ox or ass) on the sabbath: which tho' it may seem a general precept, yet in one sense particularly applies to you, who have help'd many a human ass, to the likeness of man, not to say of God.

Believe me, dear Sir, with all good wishes for yourself and your family (the happiness of which ties I know by experience, and have learn'd to value from the late danger of losing the best of mine)

Your, &c.

LETTER XLIII.

To the same.

Twickenham, June 10, 1733.

AS I know, you and I mutually desire to see one another, I hoped that this day our wishes would have met, and brought you hither. And this for the very reason which possibly might hinder your coming, that my poor Mother is dead. ³⁰ I thank God, her death was as easy, as her life was innocent; and as it cost her not a groan, or even a sigh, there is yet upon her countenance such an epression of Tranquillity, nay,

³⁰ Mrs. Pope died the seventh of June, 1733, aged 93.

almost of Pleasure, that it is even amiable to behold it. It would afford the finest Image of a Saint expir'd, that ever Painting drew; and it would be the greatest obligation which even That obliging Art could ever bestow on a friend, if you could come and sketch it for me. I am sure, if there be no very prevalent obstacle, you will leave any common business to do this: and I hope to see you this evening as late as you will, or to morrow morning as early, before this winter-flower is faded. I will defer her interment till to morrow night. I know you love me, or I could not have written this — I could not (at this time) have written at all — Adieu! May you die as happily!

Your, &c.

LETTER XLIV.

To the same.

IT is hardly possible to tell you the joy' your pencil gave me, in giving me another friend, so much the same! and which (alas for mortality!) will out-last the other. Posterity will, thro' your means, see the man whom it will for ages honour³¹, vindicate, and applaud, when envy is no more, and when (as I have already said in the Essay to which you are so partial)

The sons shall blush their fathers were his foes.

That Essay has many faults, but the poem you sent me has but one, and that I can easily forgive. Yet

³¹ Lord Bolingbroke.

I would not have it printed for the world, and yet I would not have it kept unprinted neither — but all in good time. I'm glad you publish your Milton. B—ly will be angry at you, and at me too shortly for what I could not help, a Satyrical Poem on Verbal Criticism by Mr. Mallet, which he has inscribed to me, but the poem itself is good (another cause of anger to any Critic.) As for myself, I resolve to go on in my quiet, calm, moral course, taking no sort of notice of man's anger, or woman's scandal, with Virtue in my eyes, and Truth upon my tongue. Adieu.

LETTER XLV.

To Mr. BETHEL.

Aug. 9, 1733.

YOU might well think me negligent or forgetful of you, if true friendship and sincere esteem were to be measured by common forms and compliments. The truth is, I could not write then, without saying something of my own condition, and of my loss of so old and so deserving a parent, which really would have troubled you; or I must have kept a silence upon that head, which would not have suited that freedom and sincere opening of the heart which is due to you from me. I am now pretty well; but my home is uneasy to me still, and I am therefore wandering about all this summer. I was but four days at Twickenham since the occasion that made it so melancholy. I have been a fortnight in Essex, and am now at Dawley (whose master is your

servant) and going to Cirencester to Lord Bathurst. I shall also see Southampton with Lord Peterborow. The Court and Twitnam I shall forsake together. I wish I did not leave our friend³², who deserves more quiet, and more health and happiness, than can be found in such a family. The rest of my acquaintance are tolerably happy in their various ways of life, whether court, country, or town; and Mr. Cleland is as well in the Park, as if he were in Paradise. I heartily hope, Yorkshire is the same to you; and that no evil, moral or physical, may come near you.

I have now but too much melancholy leisure, and no other care but to finish my Essay on Man: There will be in it one line that may offend you (I fear) and yet I will not alter or omit it, unless you come to town and prevent me before I print it, which will be in a fortnight in all probability. In plain truth, I will not deny myself the greatest pleasure I am capable of receiving, because another may have the modesty not to share it. It is all a poor poet can do, to bear testimony to the virtue he cannot reach: besides, that, in this age, I see too few good Examples not to lay hold on any I can find. You see what an interested man I am. Adieu.

32 Mrs. B.



LETTER XLVI.

To — — 33.

Sept. 7, 1733.

YOU cannot think how melancholy this place makes me; every part of this wood puts into my mind poor Mr. Gay, with whom I past once a great deal of pleasant time in it, and another friend who is near dead, and quite lost to us, Dr. Swift. I really can find no enjoyment in the place; the same sort of uneasiness as I find at Twit'nam, whenever I pass near my Mother's room.

I've not yet writ to Mrs. *. I think I should, but have nothing to say that will answer the character they consider me in, as a Wit; besides, my eyes grow very bad (whatever is the cause of it) I'll put them out for no body but a friend; and, I protest, it brings tears into them almost to write to you, when I think of your state and mine. I long to write to Swift, but cannot. The greatest pain I know, is to say things so very short of one's meaning, when the heart is full.

I feel the going out of life fast enough, to have little appetite left to make compliments, at best useless, and for the most part unfelt, speeches. 'Tis but in a very narrow circle that Friendship walks in this world, and I care not to tread out of it more than I needs must; knowing well, it is but to two or three (if quite so many) that any man's welfare, or memory, can be of

consequence: The rest, I believe, I may forget, and be pretty certain they are already even, if not beforehand with me.

Life, after the first warm heats are over, is all down-hill: and one almost wishes the journey's end, provided we were sure but to lie down easy, whenever the Night shall overtake us.

I dream'd all last night of. — She has dwelt (a little more than perhaps is right) upon my spirits: I saw a very deserving gentleman in my travels, who has formerly, I have heard, had much the same misfortune; and (with all his good breeding and sense) still bears a cloud and melancholy cast, that never can quite clear up, in all his behaviour and conversation. I know another, who, I believe, could promise, and easily keep his word, never to laugh in his life. But one must do one's best, not to be used by the world as that poor lady was by her sister; and not seem too good, for fear of being thought affected, or whimsical.

It is a real truth, that to the last of my moments, the thought of you, and the best of my wishes for you, will attend you, told or untold: I could wish you had once the constancy and resolution to act for yourself, whether before, or after I leave you (the only way I ever shall leave you) you must determine; but reflect; the first would make me, as well as yourself happier; the latter could make you only so. Adieu.



LETTER XLVII.

From Dr. ARBUTHNOT.

Hampstead, July 17, 1734.

I Little doubt of your kind concern for me, nor of that of the Lady you mention. I have nothing to repay my friends with at present, but prayers and good wishes. I have the satisfaction to find that I am as officiously serv'd by my friends, as he that has thousands to leave in legacies; besides the assurance of their sincerity. God almighty has made my bodily distress as easy as a thing of that nature can be. I have found some relief, at least sometimes, from the air of this place. My nights are bad, but many poor creatures have worse.

As for you, my good friend, I think since our first acquaintance there have not been any of those little suspicions or jealousies that often affect the sincerest friendships; I am sure, not on my side. I must be so sincere as to own, that though I could not help valuing you for those Talents which the world prizes; yet they were not the foundation of my friendships; they were quite of another sort; nor shall I at present offend you by enumerating them: And I make it my Last Request, that you will continue that Noble Disdain and Abhorrence of Vice, which you seem naturally endued with; but still with a due regard to your own safety; and study more to reform than chastise, tho' the one cannot be effected without the other.

— Lord Bathurst I have always honour'd, for every good quality that a person of his rank ought to have: Pray, give my respects and kindest wishes to the family. My venison stomach is gone, but I have those about me, and often with me, who will be very glad of his present. If it is left at my house, it will be transmitted safe to me.

A recovery in my case, and at my age, is impossible; the kindest wish of my friends is Euthanasia. Living or dying, I shall always be

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XLVIII.

To Dr. ARBUTHNOT.

July 26, 1734.

I Thank you for your letter, which has all those genuine marks of a good mind by which I have ever distinguish'd yours, and for which I have so long loved you. Our friendship has been constant; because it was grounded on good principles, and therefore not only uninterrupted by any Distrust, but by any Vanity, much less any Interest.

What you recommend to me with the solemnity of a Last Request, shall have its due weight with me. That disdain and indignation against Vice, is (I thank God) the only disdain and indignation I have: It is sincere, and it will be a lasting one. But sure it is as impossible to have a just abhorrence of Vice, without hating the Vicious, as to bear a true love for Virtue,

without loving the Good. To reform and not to chastise, I am afraid, is impossible; and that the best Precepts, as well as the best Laws, would prove of small use, if there were no Examples to enforce them. To attack Vices in the abstract, without touching Persons, may be safe fighting indeed, but it is fighting with Shadows. General propositions are obscure, misty, and uncertain, compar'd with plain, full, and home examples: Precepts only apply our Reason, which in most men is but weak: Examples are pictures, and strike the Senses, may raise the Passions, and call in those (the strongest and most general of all motives) to the aid of reformation. Every vicious man makes the case his own; and that is the only way by which such men can be affected, much less deterr'd. So that to chastise is to reform. The only sign by which I found my writings ever did any good, or had any weight, has been that they rais'd the anger of bad men. And my greatest comfort, and encouragement to proceed, has been to see, that those who have no shame, and no fear of any thing else, have appear'd touch'd by my Satires.

As to your kind concern for my Safety, I can guess what occasions it at this time. Some Characters ³⁴ I have drawn are such, that if there be any who deserve them, 'tis evidently a service to mankind to point those men out; yet such as, if all the world gave them, none, I think, will own they take to themselves. But if they should, those of whom all the world think in such a manner, must be men I cannot fear. Such in particu-

34 The Character of Sporus in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.

lar as have the meanness to do mischiefs in the dark, have seldom the courage to justify them in the face of day; the talents that make a Cheat or a Whisperer, are not the same that qualify a man for an Insulter; and as to private villainy, it is not so safe to join in an Assassination, as in a Libel 35. I will consult my safety so far as I think becomes a prudent man: but not so far as to omit any thing which I think becomes an honest one. As to personal attacks beyond the law, every man is liable to them: as for danger within the law, I am not guilty enough to fear any. For the good opinion of all the world, I know, it is not to be had: for that of worthy men, I hope, I shall not forfeit it: for that of the Great, or those in power, I may wish I had it; but if thro' misrepresentations (too common about persons in that station) I have it not, I shall be sorry, but not miserable in the want of it.

It is certain, much freer Satirists than I, have enjoy'd the encouragement and protection of the Princes under whom they lived. Augustus ad Mæcenæ made Horace their companion, though he had been in arms on the side of Brutus; and, allow me to remark, it was out of the suffering Party too, that they favour'd and distinguish'd Virgil. You will not suspect me of comparing myself with Virgil and Horace, nor even with another Court-favourite, Boileau 36. I have always been too modest to imagine my Panegyrics were Incense worthy of a Court; and that, I hope, will be thought the true reason why I have never offer'd any. I would only have observ'd, that it was under the

35 See the following Letter to a noble Lord.

36 See Letter CIII. to Mr. Warburton.

greatest Princes and best Ministers, that moral Satirists were most encouraged; and that then Poets exercised the same jurisdiction over the Follies, as Historians did over the Vices of men. It may also be worth considering, whether Augustus himself makes the greater figure, in the writings of the former, or of the latter? and whether Nero and Domitian do not appear as ridiculous for their false Taste and Affectation, in Persius and Juvenal, as odious for their bad Government in Tacitus and Suetonius? In the first of these reigns it was, that Horace was protected and caress'd; and in the latter that Lucan was put to death, and Juvenal banish'd.

I would not have said so much, but to shew you my whole heart on this subject; and to convince you, I am deliberately bent to perform that Request which you make your last to me, and to perform it with Temper, Justice, and Resolution. As your Approbation (being the testimony of a sound head and an honest heart) does greatly confirm me herein, I wish you may live to see the effect it may hereafter have upon me, in something more deserving of that approbation. But if it be the Will of God, (which, I know, will also be yours) that we must separate, I hope it will be better for You than it can be for me. You are fitter to live, or to die, than any man I know. Adieu, my dear friend! and may God preserve your life easy, or make your death happy. 37

37 This excellent person died Feb. 27, 1734-5.



(We find by Letter XIX. that the Duchess of Buckinghamshire would have had Mr. Pope to draw her husband's Character. But though he refused this office, yet in his Epistle, *on the Characters of Women*, these lines,

To heirs unknown descends th' unguarded store,

Or wanders, heav'n-directed to the poor.

are supposed to mark her out in such a manner as not to be mistaken for another; and having said of himself, that *he held a lye in prose and verse to be the same*: All this together gave a handle to his enemies. since his death, to publish the following Paper (intituled *The Character of Katharine, &c.*) as written by him. To which (in vindication of the deceased Poet) we have subjoined a Letter to a friend, that will let the Reader fully into the history of the *writing* and *publication* of this extraordinary Character.)

The CHARACTER of KATHARINE, LATE

Duchess of Buckinghamshire and Normanby.

By the late Mr. POPE.

SHE was the daughter of James the second, and of the countess of Dorchester, who inherited the Integrity and Virtue of her father with happier fortune. She was married first to James earl of Anglesey and secondly, to John Sheffield duke of Buckinghamshire and Normanby; with the former she exercised the virtues of *Patience* and *Suffering*, as long as there was any hopes of doing good by either; with the latter all other *Conjugal virtues*. The man of finest sense and sharpest discernment, she had the happiness to please; and in that, found her only pleasure. When he died, it seem-



ed as if his spirit was only breathed into her, to fulfill what he had begun, to perform what he had concerted, and to preserve and watch over what he had left, *his only son*; in the care of whose Health, the forming of whose Mind, and the improvement of whose Fortune, she acted with the conduct and sense of the Father, soften'd, but not overcome, with the tenderness of the Mother. Her Understanding was such as must have made a figure, had it been in a man; but the modesty of her sex threw a veil over its lustre, which nevertheless suppress'd only the expression, not the exertion of it; for her sense was not superior to her Resolution, which, when once she was in the right, preserv'd her from making it only a transition to the wrong, the frequent weakness even of the best women. She often followed wise counsel, but sometimes went before it, always with success. She was possessed of a spirit, which assisted her to get the better of those accidents which admitted of any redress, and enabled her to support outwardly, with decency and dignity, those which admitted of none; yet melted inwardly, through almost her whole life, at a succession of melancholy and affecting objects, the loss of all her Children, the misfortunes of *Relations and Friends, public and private*, and the death of those who were dearest to her. Her Heart was as compassionate as it was great: her Affections warm even to sollicitude: her Friendship not violent or jealous, but rational and persevering: her Gratitude equal and constant to the living; to the dead boundless and heroical. What person soever she found worthy of her esteem, she would not give up for any power on earth; and the greatest on earth whom she



could not esteem, obtain'd from her no farther tribute than Decency. Her Good-will was wholly directed by merit, not by accident; not measured by the regard they profess'd for her own desert, but by her idea of theirs: And as there was no merit which she was not able to imitate, there was none which she could envy: therefore her Conversation was as free from detraction, as her opinions from prejudice or prepossession. As her thoughts were her own, so were her Words; and she was as sincere in uttering her judgment, as impartial in forming it. She was a safe Companion, many were serv'd, none ever suffer'd by her acquaintance: inoffensive, when unprovoked; when provoked, not stupid: But the moment her enemy ceased to be hurtful, she could cease to act as an enemy. She was therefore not a bitter but consistent enemy: (tho' indeed, when forced to be so, the more a finish'd one for having been long a making.) And her proceeding with ill people was more in a calm and steady course, like Justice, than in quick and passionate onsets, like Revenge. As for those of whom she only thought ill, she considered them not so much as once to wish them ill; of such, her Contempt was great enough to put a stop to all other passions that could hurt them. Her Love and Aversion, her Gratitude and Resentment, her Esteem and Neglect were equally open and strong, and alterable only from the alteration of the persons who created them. Her Mind was too noble to be insincere, and her Heart too honest to stand in need of it; so that she never found cause to repent her conduct either to a friend or an enemy. There remains only to speak of her Person,



which was most amiably majestic, the nicest eye could find no fault in the outward lineaments of her Face or proportion of her Body; it was such, as pleas'd wherever she had a desire it should; yet she never envied that of any other, which might better please in general: In the same manner, as being content that her merits were esteemed where she desired they should, she never depreciated those of any other that were esteemed or preferred elsewhere. For she aimed not at a general love or a general esteem where she was not known; it was enough to be possess'd of both wherever she was. Having lived to the age of Sixty-two years; not courting Regard, but receiving it from all who knew her; not loving Business, but discharging it fully wheresoever duty or friendship engaged her in it; not following Greatness, but not declining to pay respect, as far as was due from independency and disinterest; having honourably absolv'd all the parts of life, she forsook this World, where she had left no act of duty or virtue undone, for that where alone such acts are rewarded, on the 13th Day of March, 1742-3. ³⁸

Mr. POPE to JAMES MOYSER,
of Beverly, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

Bath, July 11, 1743.

I Am always glad to hear of you, and where I can, I always enquire of you. But why have you omit-

³⁸ „The above Character was written by Mr. Pope some years before her Grace's Death.“ So the printed Edition.



ted to tell me one word of your own health? The account of our Friend's ³⁹ is truly melancholy, added to the circumstance of his being detained (I fear, without much hope) in a foreign country, from the comfort of seeing (what a good man most desires and best deserves to see to the last hour) his Friends about him. The public news ⁴⁰ indeed gives every Englishman a reasonable joy, and I truly feel it with you, as a national joy, not a party one; nay as a general joy to all nations where bloodshed and misery must have been introduced, had the ambition and Perfidy of —— prevail'd.

I come now to answer your friend's question. The whole of what he has heard of my writing the Character of the old ⁴¹ Duke of Buckingham is untrue. I do not remember ever to have seen it in MS. nor have I ever seen the pedigree he mentions, otherwise than after the Duchess had printed it with the Will, and sent one to me, as, I suppose, she did to all her acquaintance. I do not wonder it should be reported I wrote that Character, after a story which I will tell you in your ear, and to yourself only. There was another *Character* written of her Grace by herself (with what help, I know not) but she shewed it me in her blots, and pressed me, by all the adjurations of Friendship, to give her my sincere opinion of it. I acted honestly and did so. She seemed to take it patiently, and, upon many exceptions which I made, engaged me to take the whole, and to select out of it just as much as I

³⁹ Mr. Bethel.

⁴⁰ The Victory at Dettingen.

⁴¹ He says *the old Duke*, because he wrote a very fine Epitaph for the Son.

judged might stand, and return her the Copy. I did so. Immediately she picked a quarrel with me, and we never saw each other in five or six years. In the mean time, she shewed this Character (as much as was extracted of it in my hand-writing) as a composition of my own, in her praise. And very probably it is *now in the hands of Lord Harvey*. Dear Sir, I sincerely wish you, and your whole family (whose welfare is so closely connected) the best health and truest happiness; and am (as is also the Master of this place)

Your, &c.

A LETTER ⁴² to a NOBLE LORD.

On occasion of some Libels written and propagated
at Court, in the Year 1732 - 3.

MY LORD,

Nov. 30, 1733.

YOUR Lordship's ⁴³ Epistle has been publish'd some days, but I had not the pleasure and pain of

⁴² This letter (which was first printed in the Year 1733) bears the same place in our Author's prose that the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot does in his poetry. They are both Apologetical, repelling the libellous slanders on his Reputation: with this difference, that the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, his friend, was chiefly directed against *Grubstreet-Writers*, and this Letter to the Noble Lord, his enemy, against *Court-Scriblers*. For the rest, they are both Master-pieces in their kinds; *That* in verse, more grave, moral, and sublime; *This* in prose, more lively, critical, and pointed; but equally conducive to what he had most at heart, the vindication of his Moral Character: the only thing he thought worth his care in literary altercations; and the first thing he would expect from the good offices of a surviving Friend.

⁴³ Entitled, *An Epistle to a Doctor of Divinity from a Nobleman at Hampton-Court, Aug. 28, 1733*, and printed the November following for J. Roberts. Fol.

seeing it till yesterday: Pain, to think your Lordship should attack me at all; Pleasure, to find that you can attack me so weakly. As I want not the humility, to think myself in every way but *one* your inferiour, it seems but reasonable that I should take the only method either of self-defence or retaliation, that is left me, against a person of your quality and power. And as by your choice of this weapon, your pen, you generously (and modestly too, no doubt) meant to put yourself upon a level with me; I will as soon believe that your Lordship would give a wound to a man unarm'd, as that you would deny me the use of it in my own defence.

I presume you will allow me to take the same liberty, in my answer to so *candid*, *polite*, and ingenious a Nobleman, which your Lordship took in yours, to so *grave*, *religious*, and *respectable* a Clergyman 44: As you answered his *Latin* in *English*, permit me to answer your *Verse* in *Prose*. And tho' your Lordship's reasons for not writing in *Latin*, might be stronger than mine for not writing in *Verse*, yet I may plead *Two* good ones, for this conduct: the one that I want the Talent of spinning *a thousand lines in a Day* 45 (which, I think, is as much *Time* as this subject deserves) and the other, that I take your Lordship's *Verse* to be as much *Prose* as this letter. But no doubt it was your choice, in writing to a friend, to renounce all the pomp of Poetry, and give us this excellent model of the familiar.

44 Dr. S.

45 And Pope with justice of such lines may say,

His Lordship spins a thousand in a day. Epist. p. 6.

When I consider the great difference betwixt the rank your *Lordship* holds in the *World*, and the rank which your *writings* are like to hold in the *learned world*, I presume that distinction of style is but necessary, which you will see observ'd thro' this letter. When I speak of you, my Lord, it will be with all the deference due to the inequality which Fortune has made between you and myself: but when I speak of your *writings*, my Lord, I must, I can do nothing but trifle.

I should be obliged indeed to lessen this *Respect*, if all the Nobility (and especially the elder brothers) are but so many hereditary fools ⁴⁶, if the privilege of Lords be to want brains ⁴⁷, if noblemen can hardly write or read ⁴⁸, if all their business is but to dress and vote ⁴⁹, and all their employment in court to tell lies, flatter in public, slander in private, be false to each other, and follow nothing but self-interest ⁵⁰. Bless me, my Lord, what an account is this you give of them? and what would have been said of me, had I immolated, in this manner, the whole body of the Nobility, at the stall of a well-fed Prebendary?

⁴⁶ That to good blood b old prescriptive rules
Gives right hereditary to be Fools.

⁴⁷ Nor wonder that my Brain no more affords,
But recollect the privilege of Lords.

⁴⁸ And when you see me fairly write my name;
For England's sake wish all could do the same.

⁴⁹ Whilst all our bus'ness is to dress and vote. *ibid.*

⁵⁰ Courts are only larger families,
The growth of each, few truths, and many lies:
in private satyrize, in public flatter.

Few to each other, all to one point true;

Which one I sha'n't, nor need explain. *Adieu.* p. ult.

Where it the mere *Excess* of your Lordship's *Wit*, that carried you thus triumphantly over all the bounds of decency, I might consider your Lordship on your *Pegasus*, as a sprightly hunter on a mettled horse; and while you were trampling down all our works, patiently suffer the injury, in pure admiration of the *Noble Sport*. But should the case be quite otherwise, should your Lordship be only like a *Boy* that is *run away with*; and run away with by a *Very Foal*; really common charity, as well as respect for a noble family, would oblige me to stop your career, and to *help you down from this Pegasus*.

Surely the little praise of a *Writer* should be a thing below your ambition: You, who were no sooner born, but in the lap of the Graces; no sooner at school, but in the arms of the Muses; no sooner in the World, but you practis'd all the skill of it; no sooner in the Court, but you possess'd all the art of it! Unrival'd as you are, in making a figure, and in making a speech, methinks, my Lord, you may well give up the poor talent of turning a Distich. And why this fondness for Poetry? Prose admits of the two excellencies you most admire, Diction and Fiction: It admits of the talents you chiefly possess, a most fertile invention, and most florid expression; it is with prose, nay the plainest prose, that you best could teach our nobility to vote, which, you justly observe, is half at least of their business ⁵¹: And, give me leave to prophesy, it is to your talent in prose, and not in verse, to your speaking, not your writing, to your art at court, not your art of poetry,

⁵¹ *All their business is to dress, and vote.*

that your Lordship must owe your future figure in the world.

My Lord, whatever you imagine, this is the advice of a Friend, and one who remembers he formerly had the honour of some profession of Friendship from you: Whatever was his *real share* in it, whether small or great, yet as your Lordship could never have had the least *Loss* by continuing it, or the least *Interest* by withdrawing it; the misfortune of losing it, I fear, must have been owing to his own *deficiency* or *neglect*. But as to any *actual fault* which deserved to forfeit it in such a degree, he protests he is to this day guiltless and ignorant. It could at most be but a fault of *omission*; but indeed by omissions, men of your Lordship's uncommon merit may sometimes think themselves so injur'd, as to be capable of an inclination to injure another; who, tho' very much below their quality, may be above the injury.

I never heard of the least displeasure you had conceived against me, till I was told that an imitation I had made of ⁵² *Horace* had offended some persons, and among them your Lordship. I could not have apprehended that a few *general strokes* about a *Lord scribbling carelessly* ⁵³, a *Pimp*, or a *Spy* at Court, a *Sharper* in a gilded chariot, &c. that these, I say, should be ever applied as they have been, by *any malice* but that which is the greatest in the world, *the Malice of Ill people to themselves*.

⁵² The first Satire of the second Book, printed in 1732.

⁵³ He should have added, that he called this Nobleman, who scribbled so carelessly, *Lord Fanny*.

Your Lordship so well knows (and the whole Court and town thro' your means so well know) how far the resentment was carried upon that imagination, not only in the *Nature* of the *Libel* 54 you propagated against me, but in the extraordinary *manner*, *place*, and *presence* in which it was propagated 55; that I shall only say, it seem'd to me to exceed the bounds of justice, common sense, and decency.

I wonder yet more, how a *Lady*, of great wit, beauty, and fame for her poetry (between whom and your Lordship there is a *natural*, a *just*, and a *well-grounded esteem*) could be prevail'd upon to take a part in that proceeding. Your resentments against me indeed might be equal, as my offence to you both was the same; for neither had I the least misunderstanding with that Lady, till after I was the *Author* of my own misfortune in discontinuing her acquaintance. I may venture to own a truth, which cannot be unpleasing to either of you; I assure you my reason for so doing, was merely that you had both *too much wit* for me 56; and that I could not do, with *mine*, many things which you could with *yours*. The injury done you in withdrawing myself could be but small, if the value you had for me was no greater than you have been pleas'd since to profess. But surely, my Lord, one may say, neither the

54 *Verses to the Imitator of Horace*, afterwards printed by J. Roberts 1732. fol.

55 It was for this reason that this Letter, as soon as it was printed, was communicated to the Q.

56 Once, and but once, his heedless youth was bit,
And lik'd that dang'rous thing a female Wit.
See the Letter to Dr. Arbuthnot amongst the Variations.

Revenge, nor the Language you held, bore any proportion to the pretended offence: The appellations of 57 *Foe to humankind*, an *Enemy* like the *Devil* to all that have *Being*; *ungrateful*, *unjust*, deserving to be *whipt*, *blanketed*, *kicked*, nay *killed*; a *Monster*, an *Assassin*, whose conversation every man ought to *shun*, and against whom *all doors* should be shut; I beseech you, my Lord, had you the least right to give, or to encourage or justify any other in giving such language as this to me? Could I be treated in terms more strong or more atrocious, if, during my acquaintance with you, I had been a *Betrayer*, a *Backbiter*, a *Whisperer*, an *Eves-dropper*, or an *Informer*? Did I in all that time ever throw a *false Dye*, or palm a *foul Card* upon you? Did I ever *borrow*, *steal*, or accept, either *Money*, *Wit*, or *Advice* from you? Had I ever the honour to join with either of you in one *Ballad*, *Satire*, *Pamphlet*, or *Epigram*, on any person *living* or *dead*? Did I ever do you so great an injury as to put off my own *Verses* for yours, especially on those Persons whom they might most offend? I am confident you cannot answer in the affirmative; and I can truly affirm, that, ever since I lost the happiness of your conversation I have not published or written, one syllable of, or to either of you; never hitch'd your names in a *Verse*, or trifled with your good names in company. Can I be honestly charged with any other crime but an *Omission* (for the word *Neglect*, which I us'd before, slip'd my pen unguardedly) to continue my admiration of you all my life, and still to contemplate, face to face, your many

57 See the aforesaid Verses to the Imitator of Horace.

excellencies and perfections? I am persuaded you can reproach me truly with no great *Faults*, except my *natural ones*, which I am as ready to own, as to do all justice to the contrary *Beauties* in you. It is true, my Lord, I am short, not well shap'd, generally ill-dress'd, if not sometimes dirty: Your Lordship and Ladyship are still in bloom; your Figures such, as rival the *Apollo of Belvedere*, and the *Venus of Medicis*; and your faces so finish'd, that neither sickness nor passion can deprive them of *Colour*; I will allow your own in particular to be the finest that ever *Man* was blest with: preserve it, my Lord, and reflect, that to be a Critic, would cost it too many *frowns*, and to be a Statesman, too many *wrinkles*! I further confess, I am now somewhat old; but so your Lordship and this excellent Lady, with all your beauty, will (I hope) one day be. I know your Genius and hers so perfectly tally, that you cannot but join in admiring each other, and by consequence in the contempt of all such as myself. You have both, in my regard, been like — (your Lordship, I know, loves a *Simile*, and it will be one suitable to your *Quality*) you have been like *Two Princes*, and I like a *poor Animal* sacrificed between them to cement a lasting League: I hope I have not bled in vain; but that such an amity may endure for ever! For tho' it be what common *understandings* would hardly conceive, Two *Wits* however may be persuaded, that it is in Friendship as in Enmity, The more danger, the more honour.

Give me the liberty, my Lord, to tell you, why I never replied to those *Verses* on the *Imitator of Horace*? They regarded nothing but my *Figure*, which I

set no value upon ; and my *Morals*, which, I knew, needed no defence : Any honest man has the pleasure to be conscious, that it is out of the power of the *Wittiest*, nay the *Greatest Person* in the Kingdom, to lessen him *that way*, but at the expence of his own *Truth, Honour, or Justice*.

But tho' I declined to explain myself just at the time when I was sillily threaten'd, I shall now give your Lordship a frank account of the offence you imagined to be meant to you. *Fanny* (my Lord) is the plain English of *Fannius*, a real person, who was a foolish Critic, and an enemy of *Horace* : perhaps a Noble one, for so (if your Latin be gone in earnest 58) I must acquaint you, the word *Beatus* may be construed.

Beatus Fannius ! ultro

Delatis capsis & imagine.

This *Fannius* was, it seems, extremely fond both of his *Poetry* and his *Person*, which appears by the pictures and *Statues* he caused to be made of himself, and by his great diligence to propagate *bad Verses* at Court, and get them admitted into the library of *Augustus*. He was moreover of a delicate or *effeminate complexion*, and constant at the *Assemblies* and *Opera's* of those days, where he took it into his head to *slander poor Horace*.

Ineptus

Fannius, Hermogenis lædat conviva Tigelli.

58 all I learn'd from Dr. Freind at school,
Has quite deserted this poor John Trot-head,
And left plain native English in its stead. Epist. p. 2.

till it provoked him at last just to name him; give him a lash, and send him whimpering to the Ladies.

Discipularum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.

So much for *Fanny*, my Lord. The word *spins* (as Dr. *Freind* or even Dr. *Sherwin* could assure you) was the literal translation of *deduci*; a metaphor taken from a *Silk-worm*, my Lord, to signify any *flight*, *filken*, or (as your Lordship and the Ladies call it) ⁵⁹ *flimzy* piece of work. I presume your Lordship has enough of this, to convince you there was nothing *personal* but to *that Fannius*, who (with all his fine accomplishments) had never been heard of, but for *that Horace* he injur'd.

In regard to the right honourable Lady, your Lordship's friend, I was far from designing a person of her condition by a name so derogatory to her, as that of *Sappho*; a name prostituted to every infamous Creature that ever wrote Verse or Novels. I protest I never apply'd that name to her in any verse of mine, *public* or *private*; and (I firmly believe) not in any *Letter* or *Conversation*. Whoever could invent a Falsehood to support an accusation, I pity; and whoever can believe such a Character to be theirs, I pity still more. God forbid the Court or Town should have the complaisance to *join* in that opinion! Certainly I meant it only of such modern *Sappho's*, as imitate much more the *Lewdness* than the *Genius* of the ancient one; and upon whom their wretched brethren frequently bestow both the *Name* and the *Qualification* there mentioned ⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ *Weak texture of his flimzy brain*, p. 6.

⁶⁰ From furious *Sappho* scarce a milder fate,
Pox'd by her love, or libell'd by her hate. I Sat. B. ii. Hor.

There was another reason why I was silent as to that paper — I took it for a *Lady's* (on the printer's word in the title page) and thought it too presuming, as well as indecent, to contend with one of that *Sex* in *altercation*: For I never was so mean a creature as to commit my Anger against a *Lady* to *paper*, tho' but in a *private Letter*. But soon after, her denial of it was brought to me by a Noble person of *real Honour* and *Truth*. Your Lordship indeed said you had it from a Lady, and the Lady said it was your Lordship's; some thought the beautiful by-blow had *Two Fathers*, or (if one of them will hardly be allow'd a man) *Two Mothers*; indeed I think *both Sexes* had a share in it, but which was *uppermost*, I know not: I pretend not to determine the exact method of this *Witty Fornication*: and, if I call it *Yours*, my Lord, 'tis only because, whoever got it, you *brought it forth*.

Here, my Lord, allow me to observe the different proceeding of the *Ignoble poet*, and his *Noble Enemies*. What he has written of *Fanny*, *Adonis*, *Sappho*, or who you will, he own'd he publish'd, he set his name to: What they have *publish'd* of him, they have deny'd to have *written*; and what they have *written* of him, they have denied to have *publish'd*. One of these was the case in the past Libel, and the other in the present. For tho' the parent has owned it to a few choice friends, it is such as he has been obliged to deny in the most particular terms, to the great Person whose opinion *concern'd him most*.

Yet, my Lord, this Epistle was a piece not written in *haste*, or in a *passion*, but many months after all pretended provocation; when you was at *full leisure* at

Hampton - Court, and I the object *singled*, like a *Deer out of Season*, for so illtimed, and ill - placed a diversion. It was a *deliberate* work, directed to a *Reverend Person* ⁶¹, of the most *serious* and *sacred* character, with whom you are known to cultivate a *strict correspondence*, and to whom it will not be doubted, but you open your *secret Sentiments*, and deliver your *real judgment* of men and things. This, I say, my Lord, with submission, could not but awaken all my *Reflection* and *Attention*. Your Lordship's opinion of me as a *Poet*, I cannot help; it is yours, my Lord, and that were enough to mortify a poor man; but it is not yours *alone*, you must be content to share it with the *Gentlemen* of the *Dunciad*, and (it may be) with many *more innocent* and *ingenious men*. If your Lordship destroys my *poetical* character, *they* will claim their part in the glory; but, give me leave to say, if my *moral* character be ruin'd, it must be *wholly* the work of *your Lordship*; and will be hard even for you to do, unless I *myself co - operate*.

How can you talk (my most worthy Lord) of all *Pope's Works* as so many *Libels*, affirm, that *he has no invention* but in *Defamation* ⁶², and charge him with *selling another man's labours printed with his own name* ⁶³, Fye, my Lord, you forget yourself. He printed not his name before a line of the person's you mention; that person himself has told you and all the world in the book itself, what part he had in it, as may be seen at

⁶¹ Dr. S.

⁶² to his eternal shame,
Prov'd he can ne'er invent but to defame.

⁶³ And sold Broom's labours printed with Pope's Name.

the conclusion of his notes to the *Odyssey*. I can only suppose your Lordship (not having at that time forgot your *Greek*) despis'd to look upon the *Translation*; and ever since entertain'd too mean an Opinion of the Translator to cast an eye upon it. Besides, my Lord, when you said he *sold* another man's works, you ought in justice to have added that he *bought* them, which very much *alters the Case*. What he gave him was five hundred pounds: his receipt can be produced to your Lordship. I dare not affirm he was as *well paid* as some *Writers* (much his inferiors) have been since; but your Lordship will reflect that I am no man of Quality, either to *buy* or *sell* scribbling so high: and that I have neither *Place*, *Pension*, nor Power to reward for *secret Services*. It cannot be, that one of your rank can have the least *Envy* to such an author as I: but were that *possible*, it were much better gratify'd by employing *not your own*, but some of *those low and ignoble pens* to do you this *mean office*. I dare engage you'll have them for less than I gave Mr. Broom, if your friends have not rais'd the market: Let them drive the bargain for you, my Lord; and you may depend on seeing, every day in the week, as many (and now and then as pretty) *Verſes*, as these of your Lordship.

And would it not be full as well, that my poor person should be abus'd by them, as by one of your rank and quality? Cannot *Curl* do the same? nay has he not done it before your Lordship, in the same *kind of Language*, and almost the *same words*? I cannot but think, the worthy and *discreet Clergyman* himself will agree, it is *improper*, nay *unchristian*, to expose the *personal defects* of our brother: that both such perfect forms as

yours, and such unfortunate ones as mine, proceed from the hand of the same *Maker*; who *fashioneth his Vessels* as he pleaseth, and that it is not from their *shape* we can tell whether they are made for *honour* or *dishonour*. In a word, he would teach you Charity to your greatest enemies; of which number, my Lord, I cannot be reckon'd, since, tho' a Poet, I was never your flatterer.

Next, my Lord, as to the *Obscurity*⁶⁴ of my *Birth* (a reflection copy'd also from Mr. *Curl* and his brethren I am sorry to be oblig'd to such a presumption as to name my *Family* in the same leaf with your Lordship's: but my Father had the honour in one instance to resemble you, for he was a *younger Brother*. He did not indeed think it a Happiness to bury his *elder Brother*, tho' he had one, who wanted some of those good qualities which *yours* possess. How sincerely glad could I be, to pay to that young Nobleman's memory the debt I ow'd to his friendship, whose early death depriv'd your family of as much *Wit* and *Honour* as he left behind him in any branch of it. But as to my Father, I could assure you, my Lord, that he was no Mechanic (neither a hatter, nor, which might please your Lordship yet better, a Cöbler) but in truth, of a very tolerable family: And my Mother of an ancient one, as well born and educated as that *Lady*, whom your Lordship made choice of to be the *Mother of your own Children*; whose merit, beauty, and vivacity (if transmitted to your posterity) will be a *better present* than even the noble blood they derive *only* from you. A Mother, on whom I was never oblig'd so far to reflect, as to say, she *spoild*

⁶⁴ *Hard as thy Heart, and as thy Birth obscure.*

me ⁶⁵. And a Father, who never found himself oblig'd to say of me, that he *disapprov'd my Conduct*. In a word, my Lord, I think it enough, that my Parents, such as they were, never cost me a *Blush*; and that their Son, such as he is, never cost them a *Tear*.

I have purposely omitted to consider your Lordship's Criticisms on my *Poetry*. As they are exactly the same with those of the *forementioned Authors*, I apprehend they would justly charge me with partiality, if I gave to you what belongs to *them*; or paid more distinction to the *same things* when they are in your mouth, than when they were in theirs. It will be shewing both them and you (my Lord) a *more particular respect*, to observe how much they are honour'd by your *imitation of them*, which indeed is carried thro' your whole Epistle. I have read somewhere at *School* (tho' I make it no *Vanity* to have forgot where) that *Tully* naturaliz'd a few phrases at the instance of some of his friends. Your Lordship has done more in honour of these Gentlemen; you have authoriz'd not only their *Affertions*, but their *Style*. For example, *A Flow that wants skill to restrain its ardour*, — *a Dictionary that gives us nothing at its own expence*. — *As luxuriant branches bear but little fruit*, so *Wit unprun'd is but raw fruit* — *While you rehearse ignorance, you still know enough to do it in Verse* — *Wits are but glittering ignorance*. — *The account of how we pass our time* — and, *The weight on Sir R. W—'s brain*. You can ever receive from no head more than such a head (as no head) has to give: Your Lordship would have said *never* receive instead of

⁶⁵ A noble Father's heir spoil'd by his Mother.

His Lordship's account of himself, p. 7.

ever, and *any head* instead of *no head*: but all this is perfectly new, and has greatly enrich'd our language.

Your are merry, my Lord, when you say, *Latin and Greek*

*Have quite deserted your poor John Trot-head,
And left plain native English in their stead.*

for (to do you justice) this is nothing less than *plain English*. And as for your *John Trothead*, I can't conceive why you should give it that name; for by some 66 papers I have seen sign'd with that name, it is certainly a head *very different* from your Lordship's.

Your Lordship seems determin'd to fall out with every thing you have learn'd at school: you complain next of a *dull Dictionary*,

*That gives us nothing at its own expence,
But a few modern words for ancient Sense.*

Your Lordship is the first man that ever carried the love of Wit so far, as to expect a *witty Dictionary*. A Dictionary that gives us *any thing but words*, must not only be an *expensive* but a very *extravagant Dictionary* 67. But what does your Loordship mean by its giving us but *a few modern words for ancient Sense*? If by *Sense* (as I suspect) you mean *words* (a mistake not unusual) I must do the Dictionary the justice to say, that it gives us *just as many modern words as ancient ones*. Indeed,

66 See some Treatises printed in the Appendix to the Craftsman, about that time.

67 Yet we have seen many of these *extravagant Dictionaries*, and are likely to see many more, in an age so abounding in science, that the ordinary vehicles of it prove insufficient to distribute it abroad.

my Lord, you have more need to complain of a bad Grammar, than of a dull Dictionary.

Doctor *Freind*, I dare answer for him, never taught you to talk

of *Sapphic, Lyric, and Iambic Odes.*

Your Lordship might as well bid your present Tutor, your Taylor, make you a Coat, Suit of Cloaths, and Breeches; for you must have forgot your Logic, as well as Grammar, not to know, that *Sapphic* and *Iambic* are both included in *Lyric*; that being the *Genus*, and those the *Species*.

For all cannot invent who can translate,

No more than these who cloath us, can create.

Here your Lordship seems in labour for a meaning. Is it that you would have translations, *Originals*? for 'tis the common opinion, that the *business* of a Translator is to *translate*, and not to *invent*, and of a Taylor to *cloath*, and not to *create*. But why should you, my Lord, of all mankind, abuse a Taylor? not to say *blaspheme* him; if he can (as some think) at least go halves with God Almighty in the formation of a *Beau*. Might not Doctor *Sherwin* rebuke you for this, and bid you *Remember your Creator in the days of your Youth*?

From a *Taylor*, your Lordship proceeds (by a beautiful gradation) to a *Silkman*.

Thus P — pe we find

The gaudy Hinchcliff of a beauteous mind.

Here too is some ambiguity. Does your Lordship use *Hinchcliff* as a proper name? or as the Ladies say a *Hinchcliff* or a *Colmar*, for a *Silk* or a *Fan*? I will venture to affirm, no Critic can have a perfect taste of your

Lordship's works, who does not understand both your *Male Phrase* and your *Female Phrase*.

Your Lordship, to finish your Climax, advances up to a *Hatter*; a Mechanic, whose Employment, you inform us, is not (as was generally imagined) to *cover people's heads*, but to *dress their brains* ⁶⁸. A most useful Mechanic indeed! I can't help wishing to have been one for some people's sake. — But this too may be only another *Lady-Phrase*: Your Lordship and the Ladies may take a *Head-dress* for a *Head*, and understand, that to *adorn the Head* is the same thing as to *dress the Brains*.

Upon the whole, I may thank your Lordship for this high Panegyric: For if I have but *dress'd up Homer*, as your *Taylor*, *Silkman*, and *Hatter* have *equip'd your Lordship*, I must be own'd to have dress'd him *marvellously indeed*, and no wonder if he is *admir'd by the Ladies* ⁶⁹.

After all, my Lord, I really wish you would learn your *Grammar*. What if you put yourself awhile under the Tuition of your Friend *W* — *m*? May not I with all respect say to you, what was said to *another Noble Poet* by Mr. Cowley, *Pray, Mr. Howard* ⁷⁰, if you did *read your Grammar*, what harm would it do you? You yourself wish all Lords would *learn to write* ⁷¹; tho' I

⁶⁸ For this Mechanic's like the Hatter's pains.

Are but for dressing other people's brains

⁶⁹ by Girls admir'd p. 6.

⁷⁰ The Honourable Mr. Edward Howard, celebrated for his poetry.

⁷¹ And when you see me fairly write my name,

For England's sake wish all Lords did the same.

don't see of what use it could be, if their whole business is to *give their Votes* 72: It could only be serviceable in *signing their Protests*. Yet surely this small portion of learning might be indulged to your Lordship, without any breach of that *Privilege* 73 you so generously assert to all those of your rank, or too great an Infringement of that *Right* 74 which you claim as *Hereditary*, and for which, no doubt, your noble Father will thank you. Surely, my Lord, no man was ever so bent upon depreciating himself!

As your Readers have observed the following Lines:

*How oft we hear some Witling pert and dull,
By fashion Coxcomb, and by nature Fool,
With hackney Maxims, in dogmatic strain,
Scoffing Religion and the Marriage chain?
Then from his Common-place book he repeats,
The Lawyers all are rogues, and Parsons cheats,
That Vice and Virtue's nothing but a jest,
And all Morality Deceit well drest;
That Life itself is like a wrangling game, &c.*

The whole Town and Court (my good Lord) have heard *this Witling*; who is so much every body's acquaintance but his own, that I'll engage *they all name the same Person*. But to hear you say, that this is only — of *whipt Cream* a *frothy Store*, is a sufficient proof, that never mortal was endued with so humble an opinion both of himself and his own Wit, as your Lordship: For, I do assure you, these are by much the best Verses in your whole Poem.

72 *All our business is to dress and vote.* p. 4.

73 *The want of brains.* *ibid.*

74 *To be fools.* *ibid.*

How unhappy is it for me, that a Person of your Lordship's *Modesty* and *Virtue*, who manifests so tender a regard to *Religion*, *Matrimony*, and *Morality*; who, tho' an Ornament to the Court, cultivate an exemplary Correspondence with the *Clergy*; nay, who disdain not charitably to converse with, and even assist, some of the very worst of Writers (so far as to cast a few *Conceits*, or drop a few *Antitheses* even among the *Dear Joys* of the *Courant*) that you, I say, should look upon Me alone as reprobate and unamendable! Reflect what *I was*, and what *I am*. I am even *Annihilated* by your Anger: For in these Verses you have robbed me of *all power to think* ⁷⁵, and, in your others, of the very *name* of a *Man*! Nay, to shew that this is wholly your own doing, you have told us that before I wrote my *last Epistles* (that is, before I unluckily mention'd *Fanny* and *Adonis*, whom, I protest, I knew not to be your Lordship's Relations) *I might have lived and died in glory* ⁷⁶.

What would I not do to be well with your Lordship? Tho', you observe, I am a mere *Imitator* of *Homer*, *Horace*, *Boileau*, *Garth*, &c. (which I have the less cause to be ashamed of, since they were *Imitators* of one another) yet what if I should solemnly engage never to imitate *your* Lordship? May it not be one step towards an accommodation, that while you remark my *Ignorance in Greek*, you are so good as to say, you have *forgot your own*? What if I should confess I translated from *D'Acier*? That surely could not but oblige your Lordship, who are known to prefer *French*

⁷⁵ P—e, who ne'er cou'd think. p. 7.

⁷⁶ In glory then he might have liv'd and dy'd. *ibid.*

to all the learned Languages. But allowing that in the space of *twelve years* acquaintance with *Homer*, I might unhappily contract as much *Greek*, as your Lordship did in *Two* at the University, why may I not forget it again, as happily?

Till such a reconciliation take effect, I have but one thing to intreat of your Lordship. It is, that you will not decide of my *Principles* on the same grounds as you have done of my *Learning*: Nor give the same account of my *Want of Grace*, after you have lost all acquaintance with my *Person*, as you do of my *Want of Greek*, after you have confessedly lost all acquaintance with the *Language*. You are too generous, my Lord, to follow the *Gentlemen* of the *Dunciad* quite so far, as to seek my utter *Perdition*; as *Nero* once did *Lucan's*, merely for presuming to be a *Poet*, while one of so much greater quality was a *Writer*. I therefore make this humble request to your Lordship, that the next time you please to write on me, speak of me, or even whisper of me ⁷⁷, you will recollect it is full *eight Years* since I had the honour of any conversation or correspondence with your Lordship, except just half an hour in a Lady's Lodgings at Court, and then I had the happiness of her being present all the time. It would therefore be difficult even for your Lordship's penetration to tell, to what, or from what *Principles*, *Parties*, or *Sentiments*, Moral, Political, or Theological, I may have been converted, or perverted, in all that time. I beseech your Lordship to consider, the Injury a Man of your high

⁷⁷ The whisper, that, to greatness still too near,
Perhaps yet vibrates on his Sov'reign's ear.

Epist. to Dr. Arbuthnot.

Rank and Credit may do to a *private Person*, under *Penal Laws* and many other disadvantages, not for want of *honesty* or *conscience*, but merely perhaps for having too *weak a head*, or too *tender a heart* 78. It is by *these alone* I have hitherto liv'd excluded from all *posts of Profit or Trust*: As I can interfere with the *Views* of no man, do not deny me, my Lord, *all that is left*, a little *Praise*, or the common *Encouragement* due, if not to my *Genius*, at least to my *Industry*.

Above all, your Lordship will be careful not to wrong my *Moral Character*, with THOSE 79 under whose *Protection* I live, and thro' whose *Lenity* alone I can live with Comfort. Your Lordship, I am confident, upon consideration will think, you inadvertently went a little *too far* when you recommended to THEIR perusal, and strengthened by the weight of your *Approbation*, a *Libel*, mean in its reflections upon my poor *figure*, and scandalous in those on my *Honour and Integrity*: wherein I was represented as „*an Enemy* to Human „*Race*, a *Murderer* of Reputations, and a *Monster* mark'd „by God like *Cain*, deserving to wander accurs'd thro' „the World.“

A strange Picture of a Man, who had the good fortune to enjoy many friends, who will be always remember'd as the first *Ornaments* of their Age and Country; and no *Enemies* that ever contriv'd to be heard of, except Mr. *John Dennis*, and your Lordship: A Man, who never wrote a Line in which the *Religion* or *Government* of his Country, the *Royal Family*, or their

78 See Letter to Bishop Atterbury, Lett. iv.

79 The K. and Q.

Ministry were disrespectfully mentioned; the Animosity of any one Party gratify'd at the expence of another; or any Censure past, but upon *known Vice, acknowledg'd Folly, or aggressing Impertinence*. It is with infinite pleasure he finds, that *some Men* who seem *asham'd* and *afraid of nothing else*, are so very sensible of *his Ridicule*: And 'tis for that very reason he resolves (by the grace of God, and your Lordship's good leave)

*That, while he breathes, no rich or noble knave
Shall walk the world in credit to his grave.*

This he thinks, is rendering the best Service he can to the Public, and even to the good Government of his Country; and for this, at least, he may deserve some Countenance, even from the GREATEST PERSONS in it. Your Lordship knows OF WHOM I speak. Their NAMES I should be as sorry, and as much *asham'd*, to place near *yours*, on such an occasion, as I should be to see *You*, my Lord, placed so near *their* PERSONS, if you could ever make so ill an Use of their Ear ⁸⁰ as to asperse or misrepresent any innocent Man.

This is all I shall ever ask of your Lordship, except your pardon for this tedious Letter. I have the honour to be, with equal *Respect* and *Concern*,

My Lord,
Your truly devoted Servant,

A. POPE.

⁸⁰ Close at the ear of Eve. *Ep. to Dr. Arbuth.*

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I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant.

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